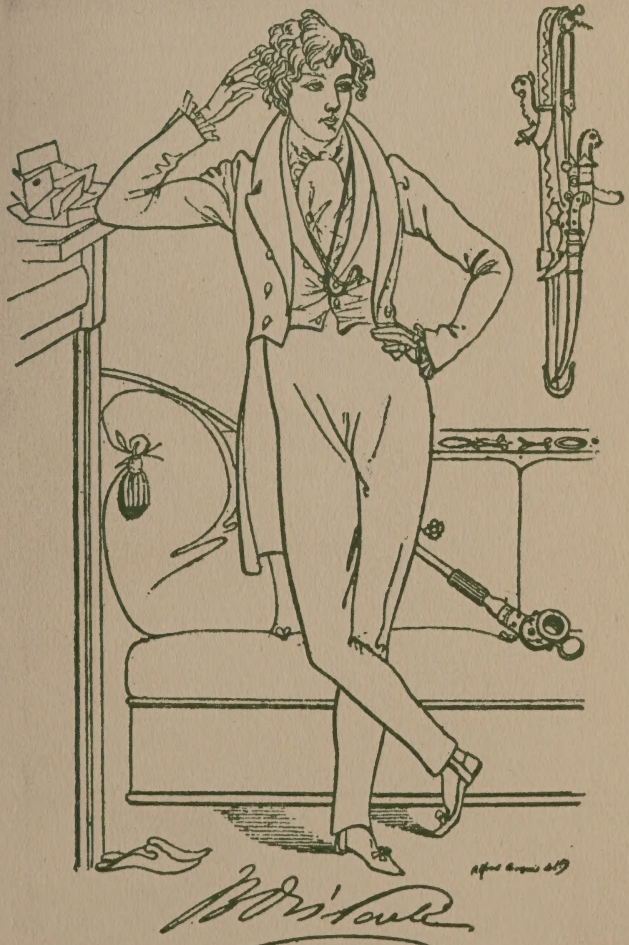
Dandies and Men of Letters



Leon H. Vincent

Dandies and Men of Letters

Leon H. Vincent

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By Leon H. Vincent

DANDIES AND MEN OF LETTERS. Illustrated.

BRIEF STUDIES IN FRENCH LETTERS AND SOCIETY OF THE 17TH CENTURY.

I. HÔTEL DE RAMBOUILLET AND THE PRÉCIEUSES.

II. THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

III. CORNEILLE.

IV. MOLIÈRE.

THE BIBLIOTAPH AND OTHER PEOPLE.

AMERICAN LITERARY MASTERS.

DEWITT MILLER: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

DANDIES AND MEN OF LETTERS

(*Page* 172)

WILLIAM BECKFORD

'The "Abbot of Fonthill" was a superb specimen.'

DANDIES
AND
MEN OF LETTERS

By LEON H. VINCENT

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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To

RICHARD BURTON

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DANDIES AND MEN OF LETTERS

DANDIES AND MEN OF LETTERS

THE CELEBRATED MR. BRUMMELL

I

HACKERAY dearly loved a dandy. We should know that for a fact even if we had not his daughter's word for it. The great novelist has portrayed every variety of the species 'beau' somewhere or other in his books. Men of fashion amused and fascinated him. They formed a department of natural history of which he never tired. He liked to describe their dress and their habits, to laugh at their pretty affectations and their monstrous vanities, to put them in characteristic situations and invent characteristic speeches for them. Every reader knows what a wealth of detail he lavished on his study of Major Pendennis, on his portrait of Harry Foker, on his sketches of the Honorable Percy Popjoy and Captain Sumph.

Mrs. Ritchie's testimony on the point is none the less pleasant to have. It may be found in that

most readable of books, *Chapters from Some Memoirs*, and is apropos of a glimpse she herself had, when a little girl, of a famous dandy of the late Forties. She came into the breakfast-room one Sunday morning and found there a magnificent creature seated at the table beside her father, so magnificent, indeed, that 'he seemed to fill the bow-'window with radiance as if he were Apollo.' She had an impression of shining studs and curls and boots. 'It was a sight for little girls to remember 'all their lives.'

The visitor was Count D'Orsay, Lord Blessington's son-in-law. He was but one, though quite the most extraordinary one, of a number of glorious beings who used to frequent the Thackeray home in Young Street, Kensington. 'I think,' says Mrs. Ritchie, 'that my father had a certain weak-'ness for dandies, those knights of the broad-cloth 'and the shining fronts.' At the time of which she writes it was still possible to meet with fine examples of the breed, 'magnificent performers of 'life's commonplaces,' to quote yet another of her happy sayings, men who knew how to dress and were not afraid of being seen in brilliant and sumptuous attire.

Thackeray knew D'Orsay, who was one of the last of the dandies; and he might have had the

BEAU BRUMMELL

Simplicity and unobtrusive elegance were his ideals. To attract notice by conspicuousness in dress was in his opinion the most mortifying experience a gentleman could have. Byron told Leigh Hunt that there was nothing remarkable in Brummell's dress except a certain exquisite propriety.

privilege of seeing Beau Brummell, perhaps did see him that Easter vacation of 1830, when he ran off to Paris for a lark instead of going into Huntingdonshire with his friend Slingsby, as he told his tutor he should do. He confessed the peccadillo in the *Roundabout Papers* years afterward.

When he reached Calais on his way home the youth stopped at Dessein's, a luxury he could ill afford, the twenty pounds he took over with him being pretty well used up. Inasmuch as Brummell did not leave Calais for Caen until September, 1830, it rested wholly with Thackeray as to whether or not he should set eyes on the famous exile; the great dandy was one of the sights of the town. In that number of the *Roundabout Papers* mentioned above, Thackeray invents an imaginary conversation with Sterne, Brummell, and Master Eustace of St. Peter's for interlocutors; and he gives the impression that with all his weakness for dandies Brummell was not one of his favorites.

One would like to know whether Thackeray ever read *The Life of George Brummell, Esq.*, by Captain Jesse, published in 1844, the very year that *Barry Lyndon* was running in 'Fraser's.' The book is supposed by many amateurs to be a rarity; it was reprinted in 1886, with the addition of a

few notes and many colored plates after Dighton. It is not a skilful literary performance. The author stood in real need of a trustworthy friend with a blue pencil and the editorial instinct. Between them they might have made an excellent biographical sketch. Having no such friend, the author put his materials together as best he could, and quite artlessly, too. Much that appears in the text would look better in an appendix. Much that is rightly placed should have been condensed. There is no room in a life of Brummell for a fourteen-page chapter on Lady Hester Stanhope, for a half-chapter on Charles Sturt, M.P. for Bridfort, for twenty pages on Erskine. Even the account of the Duchess of York, important as it is to the story, might have been condensed.

As for the long poetical extracts, they are a terrifying apparition. The fashionable world under the last two Georges used to amuse itself by writing album verse and shamelessly exposing it afterward. A few of the pieces were witty and ingenious, but the greater part remind one of the melodies in a certain vast collection of native American song dear to lovers of the unconsciously humorous. Captain Jesse could not see one of these effusions without hankering to transfer it to his pages.

His own prose is more amusing than other peo-

ple's album verse. He is delightful when he moralises. It is pleasant to read his lament over the decay of good manners. One grieves with him while contemplating the ribald modern youth (of 1844) who in private talk makes no scruple about referring to his father as the 'old boy' or the 'old cock.' Captain Jesse does not approve: 'The use of such 'coarse language, in speaking of a parent, cannot 'fail in time to breed contempt.'

He has some grave and helpful remarks, too, on the evil influence of democracy, with illustrations drawn, as is quite proper, from the United States of America. How did he come by that wonderful tale of an evening party in New York or Washington, where the guests were so voracious that they must be kept from the refreshment-room by a couple of strong-limbed servants armed with shillalahs? Had he by any chance been reading Mrs. Trollope? It sounds like one of her stories.

Captain Jesse had the materials for a first-rate biography. Not being a practised man of letters he failed to make his hero vivid. To him must we go, nevertheless, for nearly all the facts, anecdotes, bits of contemporaneous gossip, and the like, relating to Beau Brummell. Yet his seven hundred pages all told are not worth the sixteen remarkable pages devoted to Brummell in the *Journal* of Thomas

Raikes — not worth them, that is to say, if we want a living portrait of the man.

The good Captain made a journey to Caen in February, 1832, for the express purpose of meeting Brummell. He first saw the Beau (now prematurely old but still neat, graceful, and self-possessed) at an evening party, and was struck by the way he paid his respects to the hostess. The profound bow was plainly meant for a particular tribute to her. In noticing the presence of others, 'I could almost 'fancy that his bow to each was graduated accord-'ing to the degree of intimacy that existed between 'them, that to his friends being at an angle of forty-'five degrees, while a common acquaintance was 'acknowledged by one of five.' Where it was a mere question of recognizing the fact that a certain person dwelt on the same planet with himself 'a slight relaxation of the features' was made to suffice.

The observer, uninstructed in 'the mysteries of 'mufti,' having spent the last six years in India, was naturally interested in Brummell's dress. The Beau appeared in a blue coat with velvet collar, black trousers and boots. His white neckcloth was perfect, as indeed it should have been, coming as it did from the most adroit hand in Europe. For ornaments he wore a plain gold ring, a massive

chain of venetian gold (of which only a few links were visible), and the consular button. An opera hat and gloves, carried in the hand, completed his attire.

The boots rather troubled the young man from India; he had not fancied Brummell in boots. A lean purse and a shrunken shank might account for the black trousers. Evening dress for men had, to be sure, begun to take on the funereal aspect with which we are too well acquainted. The time was at hand when black and white were to be the only wear. Brummell disliked such marked contrasts. One evening he said to his future biographer, '"My dear Jesse, I am sadly afraid you 'have been reading *Pelham;* but excuse me, you 'look like a magpie."'

Captain Jesse confesses to a combination of black coat with white waistcoat, but denies that *Pelham* had aught to do with his choice.

Such was the beginning of an acquaintance out of which came the well-known Life of the great Regency dandy. And the author has our best thanks, as have the other writers who have tried their hands at the theme, Barbey d'Aurevilly and Boutet de Monvel, for example. But there is still need of a new biography of George Brummell, not a large book, two hundred and fifty pages at

most, but a witty book, done with a light touch, accurate in the highest degree, and giving in little a perfect picture of the social life of the times. Wide reading and a really profound knowledge of history are required for the making of such a book. The question is whether a man who had the learning would care to use it on so apparently frivolous a theme. There are at this moment in England two charming writers who could make such a study. But where is the courageous person who will propose to one of them to do it?

If, however, a new life of Brummell be thought not worth while, a volume on the Regency dandies and their immediate successors is a desideratum. Whatever relates to them and their period should be properly written down, — a full account of their habits and tastes, their virtues and vices, their dress, manners, and sayings; also their ideas, for contrary to the prevailing opinion they had ideas on many subjects; a Regency dandy of the first class was the direct opposite of fool.

The book we covet would give a complete view of the world of fashion, in its great and small representatives, from Brummell and Alvanley to D'Orsay and Gronow. And running along with the study of the men there should be a study of the literature to which the dandies (in part) gave

rise: the fashionable novel and rhyming satires in particular, the English world as it is mirrored in the pages of Lady Charlotte Bury, Lord Normanby, Lister, Ward, Luttrell, Bulwer, and Disraeli. That region 'once so popular, so gaudy, so 'much frequented and desired,' is by no means so desolate as a mocking genius of our time would have us believe.

Other spirits, puritanical rather than mocking, contemn these studies; yet others regard them as being at the worst idle, eating up time that might be nobly given to 'the news of the day.' 'Who 'cares about Kangaroo Cook?' exclaims a disgusted reviewer. As far as that goes, who cares about palæozoic crustaceans? Anything is of interest, and even profit, if one will take the trouble to study it. Ball Hughes, King Allan, Scrope Davies, Romeo Coates, all the dandies, genuine and pseudo, great and small, were entertaining and instructive facts, and are well worth some one's while. There is a good story, a drama, perhaps, in the life of each.

As for their being frivolous topics, they are not in the least so, or, at all events, no more frivolous than an imaginary Peter Bell or a real Deacon Brodie. If a house-breaker is worth writing about, why not a Regency buck? There are a hundred romances in the four volumes of that remarkable

Journal kept by Thomas Raikes. Some clever young man with a gift for telling a tale will extract the best of the lot one of these days and put them into shape for the market, with the result that a world packed already to overflowing with good books will be more crowded than ever. We bespeak from our clever young man a new life of the Prince of Regency dandies, George Bryan Brummell, Esquire.

II

An American humorist, remarking on the fact that Shakespeare had the inherent shrewdness to get himself buried in a spot to which tourists naturally seem to flock, adds that 'no man ever showed 'such keen discrimination in locating his grave.' Tourists do not, so far as we know, flock in large numbers to the grave of Brummell's grandfather at St. James's, Piccadilly, or of his father at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields; but one is compelled to admit that these graves, like Shakespeare's, are most favorably located.

Grandfather Brummell, whose very near neighbor in the churchyard is the famous Tom D'Urfey, carried on in his active days a business of some sort in Bury Street. Tradition says that he was a confectioner. He also let lodgings. One of his

tenants was Charles Jenkinson, afterwards Lord Hawkesbury and Earl of Liverpool. Finding his landlord's son to be quick, accurate, and intelligent, Jenkinson made the youth his amanuensis. Then he got him a place in the Treasury. Then he passed him on to another patron, Lord North, the 'God of Emolument,' under whom young Brummell throve wonderfully as to his purse, and finally married one of the prettiest girls in London, a certain Miss Richardson, whose father kept the lottery-office, and whose eldest brother was 'an 'expensive man about town' and a friend of Coutts the banker. Miss Richardson's family thought she stooped a little in taking the confectioner's son for a husband.

This industrious Brummell (his name was William) understood the amazingly difficult art of taking care of the money he made. He was in no sense a Harpagon: on the contrary, a hospitable and free-handed gentleman; he entertained his friends and he gave to the poor. His country house, 'The 'Grove,' near Doncaster, was a place that Fox and Sheridan thought it worth their while to visit. He left at his death, in 1794, sixty-five thousand pounds to be divided equally among his three children. When the second-born of the two boys, George Bryan Brummell, came of age, *his* share

of the estate had grown to the pretty figure of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

It was not a vast fortune, yet a single man, one would say, might have contrived to subsist on it. In about seventeen years the whole amount had disappeared. By what means we shall presently see. For the moment it will be enough to say that Brummell's snug fortune was not lost on the turf, or squandered on light women. There were foolish things innumerable that he would not do. The fellow had such extraordinary balance in most ways, was in such perfect command of himself at most times, that one is astonished to find him making a complete muddle of his affairs in the end.

George Brummell was sixteen at the time of his father's death, having been born on June 7, 1778, and christened at St. Margaret's, Westminster, where fair Americans have a preference for being married. He had spent three years at Eton, a term or two at Oriel College, Oxford, and was soon to become a cornet in the Tenth Hussars.

At Eton our young gentleman was known as Buck Brummell. The word 'beau' had for a time given place to other terms; the exquisites were now known as 'bucks' or 'maccaronis.' At thirteen years of age, when the average boy is all legs

and awkwardness, Brummell was the perfect example of his type, marvellously self-possessed, measured of gait, graceful of carriage, faultless in dress, but no milk-sop.

One anecdote of him is characteristic. The Eton boys and the Windsor bargemen were forever at loggerheads. During one of their disputes the boys laid hands on an unpopular bargee and were for throwing him over the bridge. Buck Brummell, who chanced to be passing, remonstrated with them,—successfully too. '"My good 'fellows," he said, in his most quiet tone, "don't 'send him into the river; the man is evidently in 'a state of high perspiration, and it almost amounts 'to a certainty that he will catch cold."'

Of Brummell at Oxford his biographer has little to say. In truth very little is known. But here was a splendid chance for a digression. Oriel College was much in the public eye at the time Captain Jesse was writing his book, and man of war though he was, the excellent Captain with his love of the discursive might well have commented on the pleasant fact that the college where Keble, Newman, and Pusey held fellowships had also been the college of Beau Brummell. Perhaps in his retreat at the Junior United Service Club he had never heard of the Tractarian Movement.

Augustine Birrell thinks that few Englishmen *did* hear of it, or, in case they did, regarded it as an affair of any moment.

In June, 1794, young Brummell was gazetted to a cornetcy in the Tenth Hussars, a regiment commanded by the Prince of Wales. It is said that Brummell had been presented to the Prince on the terrace at Windsor, when he was an Eton schoolboy. Hearing that the lad had 'grown up a second 'Selwyn,' the Prince expressed a wish to see him again. The result of the meeting was the gift of the cornetcy.

Whether their first encounter took place on the terrace at Windsor, or at Green Park farm as another 'authority' has it, is of no great consequence. The two Georges (one of whom was thirty-two years of age and the other sixteen) did actually come together and in time became intimate. Brummell easily penetrated the inner circle of fashionable society. He was present at the marriage of the Prince and Caroline of Brunswick, and went down with the newly married pair to Windsor Castle. The relation between the two was at first that of patron and protégé. As Brummell's fame increased, the pair stood, in the eyes of clubmen, tailors, and ladies of quality, about on a level. At last came the day when Brummell

tried to patronize the Prince. But that was uphill work.

The history of Brummell's military career will not detain us long. It was a farce, like the soldiering of many other young men of fashion in 1794. The saying was that he did not know his own troop, and was accustomed to find his place by aid of one of the front-rank men who had a large blue nose. Anecdotes of this simple nature (they are numberless) always end in one way. A transfer of men takes place; the Brummell of the story comes late to parade and finds his place by aid of the familiar blue nose, to the delight of his friends and the wrath, presumably, of the colonel.

For all this, Brummell was promoted to the rank of captain in June, 1796. Two years later he sold out. His withdrawal from the Tenth may have been due to the great expense of maintaining a place in a regiment of high livers. The inevitable anecdote goes along with the matter-of-fact statement to give it spice. The Tenth Hussars, who usually divided their time between London and fashionable Brighton, had been ordered to Manchester, a manufacturing town. Brummell told the Prince that to be quartered in such a place would be very disagreeable to him. 'Think, your

'Royal Highness, Manchester.' He had the wit to add, 'Besides, you would not be there.'

The Prince good-humoredly told him to do as he pleased. The youth pleased to become a man of fashion. Taking up his abode at No. 4, Chesterfield Street, Mayfair, he began to live. His ménage was small but perfect, an exquisitely furnished house, a man-cook, a valet, a pair of horses. He had consummate taste in dress, and in a short time his word, in all that related thereto, became law. He went everywhere and was welcomed wherever he went. He was a genius in his way. That we must admit, whether we like the way or not. Could he have had the prudence not to gamble on a small capital, and the wisdom to avoid a quarrel with the Prince, he might have reigned for an indefinite length of time. As it was, his supremacy lasted close upon seventeen years. Let us take a glimpse of him as he appears in the pages of a now forgotten though still readable novel.

Brummell figures as Trebeck in *Granby, a Tale of Modern Society*, by Thomas Henry Lister, Esq. He is first met with at 'Hemingsworth,' Lord Daventry's baronial mansion. Lady Daventry says to the newly arrived Lady Jermyn, her sister-in-law, 'Oh, and who do you think we have here

'now? Mr. Trebeck — *the* Trebeck — you know 'whom I mean — we take his visit as a great com- 'pliment.' When later Caroline Jermyn presses her mother to tell her about Mr. Trebeck, and in what way he is, as they say, 'fine,' Lady Jermyn replies, 'Oh, gives himself airs, and is very con- 'ceited and a great dandy and everything of that 'sort.'

Caroline thought she understood, and is surprised to find, when the guests assemble for dinner, that the famous dandy is much like other mortals. Dandy though he be, he is not even conspicuously dressed. The showy personage at 'Hemingsworth' is a certain Mr. Tarleton, a much-curled, much-beringed, bechained, and highly perfumed young gentleman, very languid, too, who had many accomplishments and 'could 'tell Lyons silk from English by the feel.'

In representing Trebeck as averse to sharing his reputation with his tailor, the novelist was true to life. 'There are many roads to notoriety. Trebeck 'began with dress; but he soon relinquished that, 'as unworthy or untenable. . . . He sickened of 'giving names to cloaks, hats, buggies, and panta- 'loons.'

Bearing in mind only the cloaks, hats, buggies, and pantaloons, an unreflecting public thought of

Brummell chiefly in connection with matters of dress. Absurd stories were told about him and believed: that he appeared in 'a dove-colored coat 'and white satin inexpressibles'; that it took two artists to make his gloves, one having exclusive charge of the thumbs, the other making the fingers and the rest of the hand; that three coiffeurs were in attendance to dress his hair, the first for the temples, the second for the front locks, the third for the 'occiput.' Brummell was undoubtedly the best-dressed man in London, and because he was exactly that, the stories are grotesque. Since the public preferred the legend he was quite willing to humor it, and when an admiring youth asked how that wonderful polish of the boots was to be effected, Brummell assured him it was only to be done by the addition of champagne.

Simplicity and unobtrusive elegance were his ideals. To attract notice by conspicuousness in dress was in his opinion the most mortifying experience that a gentleman could have. Byron told Leigh Hunt that there was nothing remarkable in Brummell's dress except a certain exquisite propriety. From which it may be inferred that his reforms were of a sensible sort.

He improved the neckcloth and has been properly commended therefor. So long as Englishmen

would swathe their necks up to the ears in immense white bandages it was not an idle labor to give the ugly things form and comeliness. It may be, as Captain Jesse affirms, that a mere touch of starch wrought the miracle; at the same time it is not unreasonable to believe that the skill with which the cravat was tied, and the precision with which the uplifted chin descended into place, ensuring the right number of artistic folds, had quite as much to do with the reform as the modicum of starch. Like the great artist he was, Brummell spared no cost in the quest of the ideal, and his valet, when asked the meaning of a great number of spotless but tumbled neckcloths he had in his arms, replied, 'Oh, they 'are our failures.'

Whatever remarks Brummell uttered on the subject of dress were of a sensible nature. For example, he used to say, 'No perfumes, but very fine linen, 'plenty of it, and country washing.' In short, it would seem not at all difficult to make out a very good case for Brummell and his achievements. Since mankind must wear garments of one sort or another, why is he not a benefactor who mitigates ever so little the ugliness of the male costume?

So it came about that Brummell made himself supreme in the world of dress. His word was unquestioned. The Prince himself had to divide his

authority with the gifted commoner. Their thrones were side by side, and it was often a question whose example carried the more weight. Everybody knows the reply that Schweitzer, the great tailor, made to the baronet when the point was raised of the cloth from which a certain garment should be cut. 'Why, sir,' said the tailor, 'the Prince wears 'superfine and Mr. Brummell the Bath coating; it 'is immaterial which you choose, Sir John, you must 'be right; suppose, sir, we say Bath coating, — I 'think Mr. Brummell has a little the preference.'

III

The chief sources of Brummell's popularity were his perfect self-possession, his grace of bearing, his wit, his good looks, and his good humor He was a handsome fellow, notwithstanding the fact that the shape of his nose had been 'modified' by the kick of a horse. His grey eyes were 'full of oddity,' the expression of his mouth inclining to the sarcastic. His features were evidently mobile, like an actor's, and it may be that the real flavor of his sayings can never be recovered for the simple reason that the look in the eye and the curl of the lip were an essential part of the witticism. His light brown hair was not over-abundant, and it seems to have disappeared early; the Brummell of Calais and of

Caen was a bewigged personage. He was probably of medium stature, though he has been pronounced tall by one acquaintance. Jesse says that he was 'about the same height as the Apollo,' and that the just proportions of his form were remarkable. He also had a finely shaped hand.

His reputation for bright and caustic sayings was very great. The industrious biographer has collected all he could lay hands on, and there is life in them yet. Take, for example, this: Byng, one of the dandies, was blessed with a remarkable head of hair which curled naturally. Brummell saw him one day in a gig with a French poodle by his side, and saluted him with, 'Ah, Byng, how do you do?' '—a family vehicle, I see.' And from that time on, we are told, the well-haired dandy was known as 'Poodle Byng.'

That was a pleasant bit of drollery when Brummell attributed a severe cold to the landlord's having put him into a room with a 'damp stranger.' Pleasant, too, was his reply to a friend who asked him why he was limping; Brummell explained that he had hurt his leg, and the worst of it was 'it 'was his favorite leg.' And yet again he put his answer rather neatly when an acquaintance asked him whether he had ever seen such an unseasonable summer. 'Yes,' replied the Beau, 'last winter.'

The *mot* reminds one of Horace Walpole's 'Spring has set in with its usual severity.'

'Do you not eat vegetables, Mr. Brummell?' inquired his neighbor at table.

'Yes, madame, I once ate a pea,' was the reply. Somehow the answer suggests Charles Lamb's drolleries.

At an Ascot meeting Brummell rode up to pay his respects to a certain titled lady. She insincerely expressed surprise that he should run the risk of being seen talking to an unfashionable person like herself. The Beau met her on her own ground. 'My dear Lady B——,' he said, 'pray don't 'mention it; there is no one near us.'

Gronow is responsible for the following illustration of Brummell's way. It seems that during the Spanish campaign Colonel Freemantle was, on a certain occasion, sent out to find quarters for Lord Wellington and his staff, and after galloping over miles of country was able to light on nothing better than a wretched hut. Ordering a fire built he went back to report, and then returned to the hut, to find it occupied by an insolent officer of the line who professed to care for neither Wellington nor the Devil, and who could only be dislodged by a threat of arrest and court-martial.

Freemantle told the story to Brummell at

White's, and when he had finished his narrative the sublime dandy exclaimed, 'If I had been in 'your place, Freemantle, I should have rung the 'bell and desired the servants to kick the fellow 'down stairs.'

Brummell's remark can hardly be taken amiss, and if but one of the bystanders thought him serious and laughed out, he would doubtless feel that he had made his point. All people cannot at all times see a joke, not excepting highly intelligent people. Matthew Arnold thought that Franklin was wholly in earnest when he proposed to improve the King James Version by bringing the phraseology up to date.

Like others of his set Brummell could be rude on occasion. Once at the card-table he addresses a rich brewer as 'mash-tub.' Now it may be that the brewer was the sort of person one would naturally address in that way. He was at all events a man able to speak for himself. For when Brummell, rising from the table with three hundred pounds of his opponent's money, said, 'In future 'I shall drink no porter but yours,' the brewer replied that he wished every other blackguard in London would tell him the same. With which remark the incident was, as our newspapers say, closed.

Should it be objected that the sayings quoted are frail foundations on which to base a reputation for great wit, the answer is that a man's best things are not the ones most often repeated. We must take the word of those who knew him. A man with whom the Duchess of York, the Duchess of Devonshire, and Lady Hester Stanhope enjoyed talking was in all probability a good talker. One who speaks with authority says of Brummell that his great power was in his conversation; 'no one 'got the better of him in the bantering, humorous 'sort of talk which suits London clubs and draw-'ing-rooms; — he was never learned, but always 'gay and to the point.'

The life of a beau of the Regency may be comprised in a few terms: the dressing-table, the club, the theatre and the opera, the assemblies at Almack's, and the week-ends at country-houses. For a man like Brummell there was little else. Many of the dandies were active politicians, or soldiers, or sporting characters. They contested elections, they fought duels in the intervals of fighting for their country, they patronised the ring, they even drove public coaches and took tips from the passengers, not because they were in need of tips, but because they desired nobly to sink their own personalities in that of the professional coachman.

Brummell, unlike these, was the man of fashion pure and simple. If, however, there were but few things to do, there was an infinite variety in the few. His days were fully occupied.

Take, for example, the one matter of dress. Even with taste and money and a faultless figure the problem is not fully solved; one must be willing to give time to it, as a painter must be willing to put time on a picture. The moralist may hold that it is a waste of time for an immortal soul to consider overmuch the cut of a coat, as he may hold that piano-playing is frivolous. But no; there must be a few good piano-players in each generation as there ought also to be a few able exponents of the art of dress. A world of Thalbergs and Brummells would be intolerable. But there is no danger of our ever seeing such a world.

We have glimpses of Brummell at various country-houses. He was often at Belvoir Castle, the seat of the Duke of Rutland, and might have been seen riding to cover in the perfection of hunting costume, with white cravat and white tops. He never rode far, having no mind to get his clothes bespattered. At Belvoir occurred the incident of his being mistaken for the Prince of Wales, and loudly cheered as he strode down to the skating-pond in a fur pelisse. Like all his set he was a prac-

tical joker, and one night, shortly after the guests had dispersed, amused himself by ringing the fire-bell in the gallery leading to the sleeping-rooms of the castle. When the commotion was at its height, Brummell advanced to the edge of the gallery and said, 'Really, my good people, I re-'gret having disturbed you, but the fact is my 'valet forgot to bring my hot water.'

Brummell was a frequent guest at 'Oatlands,' the country mansion of the Duke of York, along with Alvanley, Cooke, Yarmouth, Worcester, Craven, and other notables whose names appear in the social and political memoirs of the time. Thomas Raikes, describing these week-ends at Weymouth, says that the hour for leaving London was five o'clock on Saturday; so many chaises used to start from White's that he himself often went by Hounslow to avoid the run.

The Duchess of York (eldest daughter of Frederick Wilhelm II of Prussia) was an ideal hostess. A 'très grande dame' in the best meaning of the word, she was also 'a woman of the most admir-'able sound sense with a heart full of kindness, 'beneficence, and charity.' She introduced at 'Oat-'lands' the pleasant German custom of the Christmas tree, and liked to embroider with her own hand many of the little keepsakes that she gave.

It was taken for granted that the presents exchanged would be of moderate cost. Imagine, then, the consternation of the other guests when Brummell came down from London with an offering for the Duchess in the shape of a Brussels lace gown worth, perhaps, a hundred and fifty pounds; Brummell was then at the height of his magnificence, and, says Raikes, 'not to be 'restrained.'

It was not in the Duke or his Duchess to desert a friend; neither of them dropped Brummell after his falling out with the Prince of Wales. To their loyalty (if that be not too strong a word) may be attributed the fact that the break with the Prince made so little difference in the Beau's social standing.

The origin of the quarrel is obscure, and three or four versions of the story are told. Brummell always denied the one commonly accepted. The tale was popular and had great currency. In Calais years afterward a couple of English workmen from one of the tulle factories approached a gentleman whom they mistook for Brummell, to put this question, 'Beg pardon, sir, hope no offence, but 'we too has got a bet—now ain't you "George, 'ring the bell"?'

Brummell alienated his powerful friend through

his uncontrolled habit of sarcastic speech. He was affronted, or thought he was, and struck back with the weapons at his command. He understood their use, he could draw blood, and when once he had drawn blood a reconciliation became impossible. Brummell overestimated his own strength. That is plain from his saying of the Prince Regent, with daring boastfulness, "I made him, and I can un-'make him.' He neither did the one nor was able to do the other. But he was wholly in the right to make the remark. For what purpose was his tongue given him if not to make just such remarks, and to make them in circumstances which would ensure their being reported to the man most likely to be annoyed by them?

That famous battle royal during the Prince's morning walk seems actually to have taken place, and one is glad to think that it did. Were the historical critics to rob us of anything so perfect it would be heart-breaking. The Prince, arm in arm with Lord Moira, met Lord Alvanley and Brummell. To make the cut more apparent, the Prince stopped and spoke to Alvanley. As he and Moira turned away, the Beau said, with the air of a man who really wishes to be instructed, and in a tone loud enough to reach the Prince's ear, 'Alvanley, 'who's your fat friend?'

This was rubbing salt in a wound, if it be true, as they say, that Brummell's original offence was in alluding to the Prince as 'Big Ben' (the familiar name of the burly porter at Carlton House) and to Mrs. Fitzherbert as 'Benina.'

Deferential as they are toward royalty, the English rather like a man who stands up to his prince. Had Brummell been prudent in other ways he might, as his biographer shows, have lived on the sunny side of St. James's Street all his life. The card-table was his ruin.

He must be judged by the standards of his day. That it was wrong *per se* to gamble would not have been admitted; merely this, that it was foolish to gamble too much. The assumption was that a gentleman who had money and belonged to a club would assuredly play, just as he might be depended upon to eat if he were hungry and had strength to walk to the dining-room. Any measure that looked to the entire suppression of gambling was unheard of for years. Lord Palmerston did what he could to save Crockford's (a notorious and magnificent 'hell'), on the ground, says Lord Lamington, that the play was fair at the club, credit seldom given, and anything was preferable to private play. And when the edict went forth and Crockford's was no more, these casuists deplored its fall on the

ground that a perhaps unfortunate state of affairs had been succeeded by one far worse.

To read the tales of how men flung their money about makes one a little giddy. Raggett, proprietor of the Roxburgh Club in St. James's Square, used personally to wait on the members while play was going on, and to sweep the room himself when the debauch had ended. He told a friend that there were always enough counters lying on the floor to pay him for the trouble of sitting up. The frugal soul had made a 'decent fortune' in this way.

It was under Raggett's patronage that four gentlemen played whist from a Monday night until eleven o'clock the following Wednesday morning. They would have played longer, but one of the gentlemen had unfortunately to go to a funeral. Sir John Malcolm lost thirty thousand pounds on this occasion. The performance was one to make a bystander wag his head solemnly, though it may be the bystander would have approved Sir John's putting his money into Mexican copper stock.

Brummell was often fortunate at the gaming-table, winning on a certain occasion twenty-six thousand pounds. So large were the sums that passed from hand to hand. The young Duke of St. James, in Disraeli's novel, lost a hundred thousand

pounds in his one gambling bout; he was a rich nobleman, and Disraeli never allowed his characters to do things by halves. Taking into account the difference in their resources one is bound to hold that the Beau was more daring than the Duke. Brummell's friends advised him, on this stroke of luck, to buy an annuity. He neglected the advice and in a few days the twenty-six thousand pounds had melted away.

It pleased Brummell (he was a whimsical fellow) to attribute his downfall to the loss of a pocket-piece that he had carried for years. Fortune attended him as long as he kept his crooked sixpence. In an evil moment he parted with it to a cabman. He pretended that he advertised and that twenty people came to him with sixpences with holes in them, but his favorite piece was not among these. An acquaintance, to whom he told the story, asked Brummell if he never learned what became of the lost coin. 'Oh, yes,' replied the Beau, 'no doubt that rascal Rothschild, or 'some of his set, got hold of it.'

By May, 1816, he had come to the end of his rope. Nothing was left for him but to join the army of the impecunious who found France and liberty more to their taste than England and the King's Bench or the Marshalsea. He made a feeble

effort to stave off ruin. Everybody knows of his appeal to Scrope Davies and the reply he got, — the same Scrope Davies, by the way, who first told the world what made Byron's hair curl so beautifully. To him Brummell wrote asking in an offhand way for two hundred pounds, because the banks were closed and all his money was in the three per cents. But, alas, all Davies's money was in the three per cents, too.

Brummell was seen at the opera one night as usual, and might have been seen to leave before the curtain fell. His travelling-carriage was waiting for him on the edge of town; by morning he was at Dover, and in a few hours he had landed at Calais. At the time of his hegira the Beau was thirty-eight years old lacking a month. He lived to be sixty-two, and never found it prudent, or even possible, to step foot on English soil. As he used to say, he passed his time between London and Paris.

His flight made a sensation and the fashionable world crowded his little house (he had removed from Chesterfield Street to No. 13, Chapel Street, Park Lane) when six days later his effects were sold by order of the sheriff of Middlesex. Christie was the auctioneer. Captain Jesse reprints the descriptive title-page of the catalogue. Among the items enumerated, 'the genuine property of A Man of

'Fashion,' as Christie's announcement has it, were specimens of rare old Sèvres, articles of Buhl manufacture, plate, table and bed linen, a handsome cheval glass, books and prints, a few paintings including several portraits in oil, to say nothing of the dozens of old port, burgundy, and champagne. A silver tea-kettle brought forty-seven pounds. 'The com-'petition for the knick-knacks and articles of virtu 'was very great.' One handsome snuff-box was found to contain a slip of paper with these words in Brummell's handwriting, 'This snuff-box was 'intended for the Prince-Regent if he had con-'ducted himself with more propriety towards me.' The Beau was a good fighter and the box ought to have brought a high price.

As there is good reason to believe that Brummell's books were not for show only, any statement as to what he had on his shelves is welcome. The list cited by his biographer is incomplete, yet a man might thrive for a while on what it represents. The great dandy owned some good historical works, at least two editions of Shakespeare, the *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances* by his friend George Ellis, Chesterfield's *Letters* and Grammont's *Memoirs*, the inevitable files of the 'Edinburgh' and the 'Quarterly,' besides a 'large collection of novels now forgotten.' Certain

Italian books are also mentioned. Christie's announcement has an assuring word about the 'state' of the volumes, and the editions are declared to be of the best. Who, among the noble army of bibliophiles, have these not undesirable treasures now?

IV

Brummell's first months at Calais were spent in lodgings. He then took a suite of three rooms at the house of Leleux the bookseller, and there he lived for the next fourteen years. He had saved a little money and a few trinkets from the wreck, with the help of which he proceeded to make himself comfortable.

As whiskey to a toper and first editions to a bibliomaniac, so were costly furniture, fine china, and handsome table ornaments to Beau Brummell. Inasmuch as he bought these things for himself alone, and made no pretence that they were to go to a museum after his death, his folly has been loudly deplored. His weakness for Buhl seemed to his biographer 'an old maid's passion.' It is quite true that he was not happy unless surrounded by bumps and curves of exactly the proper sort. He must have always a little Sèvres to look at. That he could gratify the particular taste at this moment was due to the kindness of the Duke of York, who

bought a number of pieces at his sale and sent them over to him. His centre-table was, as a matter of course, strewn with snuff-boxes, card-cases, paper-knives, and the hundred and one other trifles that delight the virtuoso.

Contemplating him in his little suite over the bookseller's one inclines to think that these were, on the whole, Brummell's easiest days. He was free from persecution for the moment, and though he had fallen a considerable distance he was in no way bruised. That a worse thing could happen to him had not, as yet, entered his mind. His friends were sympathetic and liberal. He could no longer lounge through Bond Street to Watier's, but his life was by no means solitary. Calais was on the high-road to Paris. Everybody who travelled on the Continent passed that way. Brummell welcomed from time to time nearly all the men with whom he had been intimate, Alvanley, Sefton, Craven, Beaufort, and Bedford. He had a box at the little theatre, and between his books, his toilette, his dog, and his dinner, he contrived to pass the time only a degree less pleasantly than at the clubs and assemblies.[1]

[1] On July 30, 1816, Hobhouse supped with Brummell at Calais. He thought the Beau's fall as great in its way as Napoleon's. It was a wonderful sight, 'Brummell in a greatcoat drinking punch in a little room with 'us.' Hobhouse could hardly believe that what he beheld was true.

Among the tasks he set himself were learning French, decorating a screen, and writing his memoirs. The first was of prime importance. Captain Jesse says that Brummell mastered the language, that he was not 'stopped, like Buonaparte 'in Russia, by the elements,' as Scrope Davies told Byron, who repeated the witticism to Moore. As to that wonderful screen much moral indignation has been wasted upon it and its maker. The thing seems to have been a sort of pictorial scrap-book. There was a meaning, satirical or humorous, in the grouping of the figures and the decoration. Everybody the Beau had ever known was represented. It is believed that it would have been a treat to hear his comments as he was 'employed 'in cutting out, cutting up, and pasting his dear-'est friends.' This huge scrap-book (it was five and a half feet high and twelve feet long when unfolded) was designed for the amusement of the Duchess of York, a woman who was kind to everybody, and whose kindness to Brummell never failed during the few years she had still to live.

Of his reminiscences, or journal, this much is known. He wrote the memoranda in a commonplace book that was secured by lock and key. The outside of the volume was a not unfamiliar

sight (it lay on his table and he would sometimes speak of it), but no curious eye was allowed to rest on its pages. Once in the presence of a friend he carelessly turned over the leaves, remarking, 'Here 'is a chapter on Carlton House; here is one on Mrs. 'Fitzherbert and the Prince; this is devoted to 'Lady H——' and so forth.

A London publisher offered him a thousand pounds for these memoirs. Pinched though he was for money, Brummell declined the offer. Leleux, who knew of the affair, was astonished at his lodger's indifference to a thousand pounds and ventured to ask why. The Beau gave some frivolous excuse. Later when the subject came up again, Brummell told Leleux that he had promised the Duchess of York not to publish any notes that he had made, during the lifetime of George the Fourth or his brothers. 'I am under so many 'obligations to her, and have such a deep respect 'for her generous and amiable conduct to me in 'our early friendship, and since, that I would rather 'go to jail than forfeit my word. She is the only 'link that binds me in this matter.'

When he removed to Caen, in 1830, Brummell took the locked volume with him, but it was not to be found after his death. He may have destroyed it, and probably did; it is known that in his un-

happy latter days he converted the epistles of literary and titled friends into shaving-paper. After commending Brummell for not raising a thousand pounds on his memoirs by aid of a publisher, Captain Jesse suggests that the Beau 'may have 'delivered them up, for a pecuniary consideration, 'to those who were most interested in obtaining 'possession of them,' — for the purpose of keeping them out of sight, that is to say.

The dramatic incident of Brummell's life at Calais was his meeting with George the Fourth, for the quondam friends *did*, in a manner, meet. The King, who was on his way to Hanover (September, 1821), stopped for a night in the little French seaport, was entertained with a dinner at Dessein's, and went to the theatre afterward. Leleux says that when the King was driving to the hotel with the French ambassador, he himself saw Brummell 'trying to make his way across the 'street to my house, but the crowd was so great 'that he could not succeed, and he was therefore 'obliged to remain on the opposite side. Of course, 'all hats were taken off, as the carriage approached, 'and when it was close to the door, I heard the 'King say in a loud voice, "Good God! Brum-'mell!" The latter, who was uncovered at the 'time, now crossed over, as pale as death, entering

'the house by the private door, and retired to his 'room without addressing me.'

The tongues of the gossips wagged at a great rate; people generally knew of the relations between the two Georges. All sorts of tales were afloat. It was said that Brummell sent the King a box of snuff, and that the box was returned with a hundred-pound note in it. Then the story was denied, and other stories told, to be denied in turn. As the King seated himself in his travelling-carriage the next day, he was overheard to say to Sir Arthur Paget, 'I leave Calais and have not seen Brum-'mell.' But we don't know whether his tone was one of relief or regret. Had he cared to speak with his old favorite he might easily have done so. Royalty has only to 'make a sign.'

If Brummell hoped to better his state through the King's visit he was disappointed. Did he entertain any such hopes? There is really nothing to show that he did. He knew what manner of man George the Fourth was.

Brummell's ambition, in so far as he had one, was to obtain a government office, the consulship at Calais, for example, to which he might aspire in case the present incumbent were transferred to another charge; if not that, then some place no worse than Calais for a man who objected to being

quite out of the world. His friends took up his case. The Duke of York spoke to Canning about it, who declined to recommend Mr. Brummell's name to the King 'on his own responsibility.' If the Duke insisted on his broaching the subject he would do so. Apparently the Duke did not insist.

Nothing was done for Brummell during King George's life. Three months after his death, William the Fourth, at the instance of the Duke of Wellington, appointed Brummell to be consul at Caen.

The new appointee found obstacles in his path when it was a question of transferring himself from Calais to Caen. During the past fourteen years he had accumulated debts, and some skilful manœuvring was required in order to satisfy the creditors. The sum total was not great, — could not have seemed great to a man who had begun life with a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Yet it had to be paid. Captain Jesse prints the list of the Beau's obligations and waxes merry over a certain item of a hundred and seventy-five francs for oil and cold cream.

Brummell reached Caen on October 5, 1830, coming by way of Paris, where he was entertained by his friend Lord Stuart de Rothsay, and where he ordered an enamelled snuff-box at a price all out

of proportion to his means. He found lodgings at the house of a 'most cleanly, devout old lady,' whose rooms, garden, Angora cats and parrot were perfectly to his taste The best salons of the town were open to him. Like a true aristocrat he attached himself, socially, to the Legitimists, and when asked whether he had attended a ball given the night before in honor of Louis Philippe, replied, 'No, but I sent my servant.'

Within two years from the date of Brummell's arrival in Caen, the British consulate was abolished, and by his own advice. The amazement and chagrin of his friends may be imagined. That there was method in his madness is almost certain. He may have thought that the Government, in gratitude for his having shown the uselessness of maintaining a consul at Caen (where the little there was to do could be done by a vice-consul), would appoint him to another and a better charge. He coveted a post in Italy.

His stipend was wretchedly small, and he had fallen into debt with characteristic promptitude, his laundress being one of his largest creditors. Now he was in real straits, and his letters to Armstrong, grocer and English factotum of the place, are not to be read without mingled feelings of sympathy, anger, and amusement.

In May, 1835, he was arrested for debt and spent two months in prison. He was not actually housed with cut-throats and brigands, but he lived, as he himself phrased it, 'in close adjacency to these 'outcasts.' One of his fellow prisoners was a local journalist, Godefroi by name, who communicated his impressions of the great Beau to Captain Jesse. 'Il se rasait chaque jour,' said Godefroi, in a tone of astonishment. More wonderful still, 'Chaque 'jour il faisait une ablution complète de toutes les 'parties de son corps.'

Armstrong was sent to England to raise money. The Duke of Beaufort and Lord Alvanley were responsive, other friends contributed sums of money both large and small, the King gave a hundred pounds from his own purse, and Palmerston two hundred more from the public funds in consideration of Brummell's loss by the abolition of the consulate. True to his character of fine gentleman, Brummell showed neither surprise nor pleasure when the word came that he was at liberty to go home.

The salutary lesson was wasted on him. In November of that very year he was in trouble again; he would use a boot-polish costing a dollar a bottle, and Mulet the bootmaker began to threaten. Brummell damned both the polish and its maker.

The truth is that he was never quite himself after his imprisonment. Pointing to his head, he would say that he had received a blow there from which he would not recover. Though but sixty years of age he had the look of a man of seventy-five. He would fall into absent-minded fits, and when he emerged from his revery it might be to make some irrelevant remark.

There were times when he imagined himself to be living his old life and revelling in the plenitude of his social power. Then would he hold those phantom receptions of which so much has been said and written, lighting up the room as brilliantly as his poor tallow-candles would admit of his doing, having his man announce the guests, greeting them, the shadowy visitors, with his old-time courtliness as they entered.

His last state was too deplorable to be described. His biographer does not flinch from describing it, however, with painful superfluity of detail. If his account be true, the poor Beau had become intolerable. No guest at the Hôtel d'Angleterre cared now for the privilege, once so coveted, of being placed 'opposite Mr. Brummell.'

One hopes that there may be a little of dramatic exaggeration in the account; or, at all events, that if the poor fellow had his bad days he also had his

good ones. Pemberton Milnes and his wife saw Brummell in the fall of 1839, less than six months before he died; Mrs. Milnes describes the incident in her journal. By her account the fallen dandy was a pathetic rather than a repulsive object. 'He 'looked well,' she says, 'and though his coat was 'threadbare, there was still a pretension about his 'dress, and his wig was curled and arranged most 'tastefully. He walked feebly and had a look of 'vacancy. He gave us a smile of recognition, and 'said that he remembered our giving him and his 'little dog a dinner every day when we were there 'before.' The people at the hotel told Mrs. Milnes that Brummell was 'quite imbecile and that what-'ever *plat* they put before him, he ate.'

Not long afterward he was removed to the hospital of the Bon Sauveur where he was cared for with a skill and tenderness of which he stood in greatest need. He died the following March, 1840, and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery at Caen.

If his life be not 'maliciously inspected' there is really a good deal to be said in his favor. Thomas Raikes has said it, better than any one else, in the paragraphs that follow. He admits that Brummell was 'not only good-natured, but thoroughly good-'tempered. I never remember to have seen him 'out of humour. His conversation, without having

'the wit and humour of Alvanley, was highly amus-
'ing and agreeable, replete with anecdotes not only
'of the day, but of society several years back, which
'his early introduction to Carlton House and to
'many of the Prince's older associates had given him
'the opportunities of knowing correctly. He had
'also a peculiar talent for ridicule (not ill-natured),
'but more properly termed *persiflage*, which if it
'enabled him to laugh some people out of bad
'habits, was, I fear, too often exerted to laugh
'others out of good principles.

'He was liberal, friendly, *serviable*, without any
'shuffling or tortuous policy or meanness, or ma-
'nœuvring for underhand objects; himself of no
'rank or family, but living always with the high-
'est and noblest in the country, on terms of inti-
'macy and familiarity, but without *bassesse* or truck-
'ling; on the contrary, courted, applauded, and
'imitated, protecting rather than protected, and
'exercising an influence, a fascination in society
'which no one even felt a wish to resist.'

From what Raikes says of the darker side of Brummell's character I cannot make out that his faults were more or worse than those of his contemporaries. His balance was so perfect in many ways that it is surprising to find that he had no recuperative power when once he was down.

COUNT ALFRED D'ORSAY

I

N a recent French book entitled *Les Dandys*, by Jacques Boulenger, a work distinguished by much vivacity and a wealth of footnotes, I read that within a month from the time of his first arrival in England (1821), Alfred D'Orsay, then barely twenty years of age, 'avait relevé le 'sceptre de Brummell.'

He had, as a matter of fact, done nothing of the sort, though he had done much. It was a great affair in those days, and in the highly organized society of London, to have made an immediate social success, to have really shone at Almack's, to have been welcomed by the most exacting of hostesses, and to have been summoned to meet the newly crowned King. But to take up the sceptre of Brummell was quite another affair, and a more difficult. There was but one Brummell and Count D'Orsay was not his heir. A youth whom Byron described to Moore by the phrase

COUNT ALFRED D'ORSAY

'A striking figure he was in his blue coat with gilt but-
'tons, thrown well back to show the wide expanse of
'snowy shirt-front and buff waistcoat; his tight leathers
'and polished boots; his well-curled whiskers and hand-
'some countenance; a wide-brimmed glossy hat, spotless
'white gloves. He was the very beau-ideal of a leader
'of fashion.'

'Cupidon déchaîné' was hardly to be viewed in the light of successor to a cool, ironical hand like Brummell. I can imagine Lord Byron, whose self-possession was notorious, as being in certain circumstances rather afraid of George Brummell, Esquire, — afraid of being put out of countenance, of being made ridiculous. But for a handsome, laughing, witty, good-natured boy, such as D'Orsay was when Byron first saw him, but one sentiment was possible, a hearty liking; he was born to be admired and enjoyed.

What the young Frenchman did on this his first visit to England was not to take up the sceptre of Brummell, but to prepare the way for a supremacy of his own, quite unlike that of the great English dandy. Their careers were not only unlike, but they had not even a chronological relation to justify the belief that the later dandy 'succeeded' the earlier. Brummell's reign came to an end in 1816, D'Orsay did not begin his until about 1831, when he became a resident of London. He was a bird of passage in 1821, but one of such brilliancy as to be much talked about.

His good looks were no doubt an inheritance from his father, 'le beau D'Orsay' as he was called, a general in the army of Napoleon. He had other

relations besides a father, who may be taken for granted; the story of his genealogical affiliations is interesting, but too complicated for unravelment in a brief paper like this. The boy was nominated to be one of the Emperor's pages when he should have grown up. The Empire fell, the Bourbons returned, and he became instead a soldier in the Royal Bodyguard.

If we may trust the *Dictionary of National Biography* (and if we may not, what are we to trust in a world filled with imperfect books of reference?), D'Orsay made his first entrance into English society at an entertainment given at Almack's by his brother-in-law, the Duc de Guiche (afterward the Duc de Gramont), ambassador to the Court of St. James; it was one of many brilliant affairs that followed the coronation of George the Fourth. Among the agreeable houses he frequented was No. 10, St. James's Square, then occupied by the Earl of Blessington (in the Irish peerage) and his lively and attractive Countess. Young D'Orsay's first meeting with the lady, whose fortunes and misfortunes he was to share, deserves to be celebrated in terms more rhetorical than a biographical dictionary could afford to use. I therefore quote from J. Fitzgerald Molloy, who, in his book entitled *The Most Gorgeous Lady*

Blessington, describes the event thus: 'With the 'courtly manner of the old régime, with an ardent 'admiration for women's beauty, an appreciation 'for talent, endowed with a sunny youth regard-'ing whose undefinable future it was interesting 'to speculate, he [D'Orsay] stood before Lady 'Blessington, a dazzling personality in a crowd 'where all were brilliant. For a moment, as it 'were, the circles of their lives touched to part for 'the present,' the young man being obliged, as the rest of the paragraph shows, to go back to his regiment. This is brave writing. J. Fitzgerald Molloy knows the trick. But after a burst of eloquence he never fails to elucidate.

As D'Orsay's story from first to last is interwoven with that of Lady Blessington, it will not be superfluous to sketch the early history of that remarkable woman.

She was Irish, a Tipperary girl, one of the six children of Edmund Power, a 'squireen' whose lordly manners, white cravats, ruffles, and fob seals gained him the name of 'Shiver-the-frills.' He was a tempestuous and tyrannical sort of person, one of the sort we thoroughly enjoy on the stage and should find an unmitigated nuisance in real life. At the age of fifteen, Margaret Power was literally driven by her father into marrying a cer-

tain Captain Farmer,[1] from whose brutalities she escaped at the earliest possible moment to return to a home where she was not welcome. Farmer went to India.

Some two years afterward the terrifying news that he would return and claim her led the unhappy young wife, in the phrase beloved of cautious writers, to place herself 'under the protection' of one Captain Jenkins, who belonged to an old Hampshire family and who was both rich and amiable.

Five or six years later she changed protectors, and was installed by the Earl of Blessington in a house in Manchester Square, London. In October, 1817, Farmer, while rioting with some friends of his, enforced lodgers in the King's Bench Prison, fell from an open window, was carried to a hospital, and died there the next day. In February of the following year the Earl 'promoted' Margaret Farmer to be his second wife and the Countess of Blessington. She was now twenty-nine years of age; her husband was thirty-six.

This, in bald outline, is the story of the squireen's daughter up to the time when she became a

[1] Farmer's brother says that 'it was in every sense a love-match. . . . See his letter in Madden's *The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington*, vol. I, pp. 457–59.

Countess; and people still think that they must go to novels to learn about 'life.'

Statements of fact so cold and chronological need a touch of color by way of relief. Let us borrow from Molloy's glowing pages a pen-picture of the Earl of Blessington (then Viscount Montjoy) as he might have appeared when first he dawned on London society. 'Loaded with 'wealth and honour, the world was a sunny place 'in his sight; young and handsome, he accepted 'the favours it offered him and enjoyed its pleas-'ures to the full. No brighter youth danced in 'satin breeches at Almack's; none gayer gave de-'licious suppers in the lamp-lit bowers of Vaux-'hall gardens. Tall, vigorous, bright-eyed and 'winsome, generous to extravagance and sweet-'natured, he was caressed by all who like him-'self loved gaiety and seized the sunshine of the 'hour.' What would one not give for the talent to write like that, and the courage to use one's talent!

Viscount Montjoy had been educated at Eton and at Christ Church, Oxford, and was a very agreeable fellow. No better proof is wanted than that Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, whose college mate he was, liked him. He is a 'great comfort 'to me,' Sharpe writes to his mother, albeit his

voice is 'fully as discordant as mine. My Lord 'speaks as if he was playing on a comb.'

After a brief visit in Ireland the Earl of Blessington took a house for his new Countess in St. James's Square and flung wide his doors. They were an open-handed and hospitable pair, and showy in their mode of life. All manner of interesting people came to them, from princes and peers to painters, actors, journalists, and starveling authors. If we may believe Lady Blessington's biographer she was a capital hand at taming a Royal Duke; so at least we interpret his statement that 'Royal Dukes were as humble subjects 'before her whom nature had made regal.'

Interesting though their life was it grew monotonous in time. A thirst for travel came upon them, and in August, 1828, the Blessingtons left England for an extended tour of Italy. The Countess had with her the youngest of her sisters, Mary Anne Power. D'Orsay, to whom the Earl had taken a wonderful liking, joined them at Avignon. The retinue of servants was for number what might be expected. The coming of the party was a joy to innkeepers, their departure a grief. The Earl flung his money about in kingly fashion, and his young friend D'Orsay did as a youth would who had been brought up to believe that 'every-

'body had any conceivable number of five-pound 'notes.'

They travelled in a leisurely way after the manner of the time, and as is always the privilege of the well-to-do. At Genoa they saw much of Byron. D'Orsay made a portrait of the poet; Lady Blessington jotted down notes of his conversation; the Earl helped him financially by taking his yacht off his hands, at somewhat more than it was worth. They visited Florence, Siena, and Rome, and finally settled themselves in Naples for a long stay; it proved to be nearly three years in duration. Blessington made one trip to England in the meantime and brought back with him a young architect, Charles Mathews, in whom he had become interested. Among their close friends were Sir William Drummond, Sir William Gell, and Keppel Craven. All the visiting English were made welcome at their palazzo. We hear of them at Florence, at Genoa again, and at Pisa, where they spent six months, made Landor's acquaintance, and entertained Wilkie, Lister, and Francis Hare.

D'Orsay was now regarded in the light of prospective son-in-law, and had for some time been so regarded. Lord Blessington's heir and only legitimate son had died in April, 1823; he was but nine

years of age. Within two months from that time the Earl had decided to make one of his daughters his heiress and marry her to Count D'Orsay. Neither of the girls (they were both in Ireland with their governess) was consulted in the matter, nor by the customs of the day had any reason to expect that she would be; young ladies in that era of firm discipline took the husbands who were assigned them with a docility unknown to our lax age.

Blessington now decided that the proposed marriage ought to take place; and take place it accordingly did, at Naples, in December, 1827. The bride, Lady Harriet Gardiner, the Earl's only legitimate daughter, was in her sixteenth year when she became the Countess D'Orsay.

The following spring the Blessingtons and the D'Orsays left Italy for Paris, where they lived in the same florid style that had distinguished them at Naples. In May, 1829, Lord Blessington went over to England to vote on the Catholic Emancipation Bill. He was not in good health when he undertook the journey, and shortly after his return died of an apoplectic stroke. He was but forty-six years of age. Karl Elze's description of him as a 'somewhat insignificant but good-natured old gen-'tleman' is therefore not in all respects accurate.

Almost from the moment of her husband's death the gossips — the worst of whom were of the male sex and wrote for the press — began to make free with Lady Blessington's name.

In November, 1830, she returned to London, bringing her sister and the Count and Countess D'Orsay in her train. After a brief stay in St. James's Square she took a house in Seamore Place, at the west end of Curzon Street, and opened her salon. In 1836 she removed to the mansion known as Gore House, in Kensington, where she remained until 1849, the year of her financial ruin and her death. Her social supremacy in that part of the world of London that came under her influence continued almost exactly eighteen years. If it pleases one to speak of Gore House, in the language of our French essayist quoted above, as a 'véritable hôtel de Rambouillet,' there is no great harm in so doing. But one must not make the mistake of supposing the resemblance more than superficial.

Count D'Orsay's reign as King of the Dandies was synchronous with the life of Lady Blessington's salon. He was in constant attendance at Gore House. The Count and his wife had separated by mutual consent, in the autumn of 1831; the young lady (she was but nineteen) returned to Paris

where she embarked on a career of her own, and a romantic one, though it forms no part of this story. D'Orsay took a separate house after his wife's departure, but for all that the relations between Lady Blessington and himself were thought to be equivocal. The fame of Gore House was 'distinctly Bohemian.' Many women preferred not to go there, though their husbands and brothers had no such scruples.

II

It is amusing to find Lord Beaconsfield called to account as late as the year 1878, for his old-time alliance with Gore House. Disraeli, it seems, had described his friend D'Orsay (the Count Alcibiades de Mirabel of *Henrietta Temple*) as 'the 'most accomplished and the most engaging char-'acter that has figured in this century,' together with a number of other eulogistic epithets of the sort that a man of many phrases thinks it no harm to bestow on a friend. To be sure all this was 'in the olden time, long ago,' some forty-one years since to be exact. But that made no difference to the brilliant pamphleteer who wrote *The Political Adventures of Lord Beaconsfield.* From his tone one would think that *he* thought grave political consequences might still flow from Disraeli's

old susceptibility to the charms of Count Alcibiades de Mirabel.

This lively writer probably thought nothing of the kind, but it pleased him, in the rôle of political critic, to find something sinister in Disraeli's former alliance with Gore House and with those who frequented it. He accuses the Prime Minister of 'fixing his gaze' (when he might have been contemplating nobler objects) 'on the D'Orsays, and 'the Tom Duncombes, and the Louis Napoleons, '. . . the spendthrifts and adventurers and con-'spirators' whom he met at Lady Blessington's. What amazing things men will give vent to when they write on politics!

The adventurers and the spendthrifts were undoubtedly to be found there, but so too were many men of quite another sort — poets, novelists, musicians, actors, politicians and journalists, lawyers and professional wits, not a few of whom stood in the first rank in their day, and are affectionately and admiringly remembered in ours. Their presence at Gore House gave the place that air of distinction it certainly had.

Lady Blessington was herself a maker of books. Before her husband's death she had printed two little volumes of sketches; after her return to England she became a professional author, partly to

supplement an income that was inadequate to her present mode of life, but partly, we may be sure, from a genuine love of letters. As a writer she probably merits the group of adjectives once applied to her, 'hard-working, copious, careless, and 'uninspired.' She made money by her work. Not a few of her books were in a high degree successful; they were timely, they had a certain facile charm, and what is more to the point they were the literary productions of a countess. A naïve reading-public still believed in the peculiar virtues of a literature that flowed from the pen of a person of quality, and would buy the books of a countess when it would buy nothing else. This is an evil under the sun which happily no longer exists, but for many years it was a thorn in the flesh of trained though untitled authors. Goldsmith complained of it with as much bitterness as his nature permitted.

Her two best known books are *A Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington* (published serially in the 'New 'Monthly Magazine,' 1832–33), and *The Idler in Italy* (1839). The first is a genuine contribution to Byronic literature, a 'source' from which biographical writers must to some extent draw. The Italian book may be read for its many sketches of

remarkable people, and for the light it throws on modes of travel in 1822. A copy of the first edition of *The Idler in Italy* (not mine, alas!) lies before me as I write; it is inscribed 'To Lord 'Brougham from Marguerite Blessington,' with the date. Her ladyship wrote a rather striking hand.

She also edited for a number of years the 'Book 'of Beauty' and 'The Keepsake,' illustrated annuals which were not quite so absurd as we are taught to believe. And finally Lady Blessington wrote a shelfful of novels, no one of which is read at the present day. But what of that? They served their purpose in bringing money and a short-lived fame to their author. Most of the books that we now read can do no more, and the greater number of them cannot even do that.

We can see why Gore House, though aiming to be a centre of the fashionable world, was markedly 'literary.' Lady Blessington was genuinely interested in letters, and D'Orsay quite as much so as his friend. The story that D'Orsay would at any time leave a duke to talk to an author may not be true, but he must have shown certain preferences respecting men of letters else the story had not come into existence.

'Everybody goes to Lady Blessington's,' wrote

Haydon in 1835; he was not far wrong. Landor always made Gore House his home when he was in London. The two lilac trees in the garden under the terrace where he had his favorite seat are celebrated in his verse. Landor introduced Milnes to his hostess. Forster and Dickens were frequent guests; so too were Disraeli, Thackeray, and Theodore Hook. There it was that Bulwer and Lockhart made up their quarrel. In its drawing-room might have been seen guests as unlike as Trelawny and Crabb Robinson, as Prince Louis Napoleon and Barry Cornwall, as Doctor Lardner and Samuel Rogers. There Macready heard Liszt play in a magnificent fashion and came away with his soul in a tumult. The catalogue of names, which includes Landseer, Liston, Chorley, Lover, and Willis (I choose the men at random), is almost endless.

Among them was no more shining figure than D'Orsay's. Every one admits that he was a talented fellow, and every one who knew him thought he could become anything he liked. Disraeli apostrophizes him thus: 'The inimitable D'Orsay, . . . 'who with the universal genius of an Alcibiades 'combined a brilliant wit and a heart of quick 'affection, and who, placed in a public position, 'would have displayed a courage, a judgment, and

'a commanding intelligence which would have 'ranked him with the leaders of mankind.' This is rather florid, but it only differs in degree from what more sober writers have said of the famous dandy.

Landor believed that D'Orsay could write, and urged him to 'put his pen in motion.' He could handle crayon and brush at all events, and made lively sketches of his contemporaries. The Duke of Wellington sat to him for a portrait and is said to have said, when it was finished, that at last he had been painted like a gentleman. Carlyle had it in mind to send the sketch of himself by D'Orsay, to Emerson. He describes how the great dandy came to see him, rolling down to Cheyne Row in his sun-chariot, 'to the bedazzlement of all 'beholders,' and how the dandy and the man of letters got on remarkably well together. Carlyle admits that D'Orsay was worth talking to, once and away; 'a man of decided natural gifts; every 'utterance of his containing in it a wild caricature '*likeness* of some object or other; a dashing man, 'who might, some twenty years sooner born, have 'become one of Bonaparte's Marshals, and *is*, alas, '— Count D'Orsay.'

Coming from Carlyle these are fair words indeed. They suggest too that, dandy though he was,

the Count was a man's man, not a mere drawing-room idler of the better sort. What he said that so amused Carlyle would be worth knowing. Beyond a little handful of clever and pointed sayings no record of his talk exists, nor was it to be expected that there should.

Captain Gronow gives two examples of D'Orsay's wit. Lord Allen, who was rather the worse for the wine he had taken at dinner, chose to irritate the Frenchman by saying some extremely ill-natured things. 'Suddenly John Bush entered 'the club and shook hands with the Count, who 'exclaimed, "Voila la différence entre une bonne '*bouche* et une mauvaise *haleine*."'

The other was apropos of a certain nobleman who, having lost the use of his legs, was wont to wheel himself about in a Bath chair. Some one asked the Count the name of the English peer. D'Orsay replied, 'Père la Chaise.' It was a very little thing, but it was neat.

One anecdote of D'Orsay and Gronow is, I think, not recorded by the latter. The Frenchman, who was six feet in height, and broad-shouldered, used to address the little English officer as 'Nogrow'; and when on one occasion the Captain besought his friend, jocularly, no doubt, to give him a certain gorgeous waistcoat he was

wearing, D'Orsay replied, 'Wiz plesure, Nogrow, 'but what will you do wiz him? . . . Ah! he shall 'make you one dressing-gown.'

D'Orsay's remark when told that Sir Henry Bulwer had been sent on a diplomatic mission to Constantinople was one of his best. The version given here is Henry F. Chorley's. '*Quelle bêtise*,' exclaimed the Count, 'to send him there among 'those Turks, with their beards and their shawls '— those big handsome fellows — a little grey 'man like that! They might as well have sent 'one whitebait down the Dardanelles to give the 'Turks an idea of English fish.'

The Bulwer anecdote is one of two that Chorley gives in his *Autobiography*, in the vain hope of bringing up 'the magnificent presence, and joyous, 'prosperous voice and charming temper' of the man who uttered them. He grants that much is lost in the retelling, that 'something of the aroma 'dies on the lips of the speaker.' None the less does he maintain that D'Orsay's wit was 'more airy' than the brightest London wit of his time, not even excepting that of Fonblanque and Sydney Smith. 'It was an artist's wit,' he says, 'capable of touch- 'ing off a character by one trait told in a few odd 'words.'

Penetrating as his gaze was, D'Orsay could not

see far into the character of Louis Napoleon, on whose connection with Gore House an interesting chapter might be written. 'C'est un brave 'garçon,' he would say, 'mais pas d'esprit'; and he would smile when the Prince spoke, as he often did, about returning to France. D'Orsay was not more at fault in the matter than was the rest of the world, including a number of Louis Napoleon's own kin, one of whom besought him not to make a fool of himself by talking as he did.

It was thought that after his triumph, when Lady Blessington and Count D'Orsay had taken refuge from their difficulties in Paris, Napoleon was not sufficiently mindful of old friends who had done much for him; it is a point not to be settled off-hand. The President and the Countess had one verbal encounter worth repeating. They met on some formal occasion and Louis inquired, 'Vous pensez rester à Paris très long-'temps, Milady?' Lady Blessington instantly replied, 'Et vous, Monseigneur?'

Lord Lamington, who tells this anecdote in his pleasant little book, *In the Days of the Dandies*, also gives us a picture of D'Orsay, in glorious apparel, riding down to Richmond. 'A striking 'figure he was in his blue coat with gilt buttons,

'thrown well back to show the wide expanse of 'snowy shirt-front and buff waistcoat; his tight 'leathers and polished boots; his well-curled 'whiskers and handsome countenance; a wide 'brimmed glossy hat, spotless white gloves. He 'was the very beau-ideal of a leader of fashion. . . . 'I was greatly interested in noting the admiration 'with which he was regarded.' Kensington and Brompton were fully awake to the glory of the spectacle; the populace stared at the great dandy 'as at a superior being.'

In Haydon's *Autobiography* is a capital account of D'Orsay touching up one of the artist's pictures. He made the painter's heart ache when he took up the brush and proceeded to give a practical illustration of his critical ideas. But Haydon's heart ached, not for his picture, but for the dandy's primrose-tinted gloves. After one of his visits Haydon wrote, 'He bounded into his cab, 'and drove off like a young Apollo with a fiery 'Pegasus. I looked after him. I like to see such 'specimens.'

Good as are the sketches by Lamington and Haydon, there is a better. It comes from the pen of Mrs. Carlyle and was written in one of her note-books, of which unfortunately 'only frag-'ments' remain. The clever lady destroyed most of

them herself, and a deal of good literature disappeared when she did that.

By a happy coincidence she was re-reading her husband's 'Philosophy of Clothes' when D'Orsay walked in. She had not seen him in four or five years. 'Last time he was as gay in his colours as 'a humming-bird — blue satin cravat, blue velvet 'waistcoat, cream-coloured coat, lined with vel-'vet of the same hue, trousers also of a bright 'colour, I forget what; white French gloves, two 'glorious breastpins attached by a chain, and 'length enough of gold watch-guard to have 'hanged himself in.'

She mentally contrasted the radiant dandy of a recent past with the more sedately garbed D'Orsay who now sat in her little reception-room. 'To-day, in compliment to his five more years, he 'was all in black and brown — a black satin cra-'vat, a brown velvet waistcoat, a brown coat, some 'shades darker than the waistcoat, lined with vel-'vet of its own shade, and almost black trousers, 'one breast-pin, a large pear-shaped pearl set into 'a little cup of diamonds, and only one fold of gold 'chain round his neck, tucked together right on 'the centre of his spacious breast with one magni-'ficent turquoise.'

Mrs. Carlyle was fain to admit that D'Orsay

understood his trade. 'If it be but that of dandy 'nobody can deny that he is a perfect master of it. '. . . A bungler would have made no allowance for 'five more years at his time of life; but he had the 'fine sense to perceive how much better his dress 'of to-day sets off his slightly enlarged figure and 'slightly worn complexion, than the humming-'bird colours of five years back would have done.'

She sighed a little over the brilliant creature, and confided to her note-book that D'Orsay was born to be something better than even the king of dandies. Was he then born to be that 'some-'thing better,' had he the power to be? Did not his gifts carry him about as far as he could hope to go, make of him the most that he could hope to become, which was a magnificent performer of life's commonplaces, in the phrase of Mrs. Ritchie already quoted?

Before Count D'Orsay left, Lord Jeffrey came in. 'What a difference!' Mrs. Carlyle wrote in her note-book; 'the prince of critics and the prince of 'dandies. How washed out the beautiful dandiacal 'face looked beside that clever little old man's! 'The large blue dandiacal eyes, you would have 'said, had never contemplated anything more in-'teresting than the reflection of the handsome per-'sonage they pertained to in a looking-glass; while

'the dark penetrating ones of the other had been 'taking note of most things in God's universe, even 'seeing a good way into millstones.'[1]

So it looked to Mrs. Carlyle in the year 1845. Her Jeffrey was a very great man, capable of seeing a good way into millstones. To-day the reputation of the 'prince of critics' is about as phantasmal as that of the prince of dandies; he is read only by the curious in literary history, and he lives in the popular mind by virtue of having uttered certain telling phrases expressive of his fine inaccessibility to new ideas. He had his own generation, said a later and far better critic than he, 'the laughter 'of men, the applause of drawing-rooms, the con-'currence of the crowd.' In a word Jeffrey lived, like D'Orsay, for the day, for the hour. The contrast between the pair as they sat in Mrs. Carlyle's parlor, was by no means so great, morally, as it seemed to their hostess.

She thought that D'Orsay was not so vivacious as when she saw him last; he sparkled less, and after he was gone she could recall but one remark of his that seemed worth writing down. Perhaps his troubles — he took infinite pains to hide them — were beginning to weigh on his spirits; or it may be that having 'come to forty year' and a

[1] *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*, 1, 222–23.

little more, he aimed to dress his speech as becomingly as his person.

III

D'Orsay passed half his life in paying quixotic devotion to a woman nine years his senior, and after all, the impression one gets of him in the journals and reminiscences of his contemporaries is, as I have said, of a man's man. Lord Lamington especially admired him for his 'great quality of 'self-command; this enabled him to bear his own 'burden of life without inflicting the history of 'his sorrows on others.' Lamington sometimes passed an afternoon with D'Orsay in the gardens of Gore House. The Count at no time made the slightest reference to his financial plight. He was now terribly straitened for money, his efforts to obtain a diplomatic post turned out fruitless, and he could not hope to live by art, by the exercise of what a fellow-countryman pityingly described as his 'joli talent d'amateur.' He was almost a prisoner, not daring to leave home through the week for fear of arrest. From midnight on Saturday to midnight on Sunday, however, he was a free man, and might have been seen at Crockford's 'always gay and smiling, as if he had no anxieties 'or fears.'

Dickens's word should carry some weight and Dickens thought the Count an uncommonly likable fellow. The novelist's fourth son was christened Alfred Tennyson, but the Alfred was for D'Orsay, who, as the Laureate remarked, was on that occasion 'co-godfather with me,' — 'godfather' and 'devil-father' was Browning's sarcastic comment, in a letter not intended for publication.

Writing to Lady Blessington from Milan, in November, 1844, Dickens says, 'Pray say to Count 'D'Orsay everything that is cordial and loving 'from me. The travelling purse he gave me has 'been of immense service. It has been constantly 'opened. All Italy seems to yearn to put its hand 'in it.' At another time Dickens writes Lady Blessington that 'it would be worth going to 'China — it would be worth going to America' (he named the most awful place and the most frightful journey he could think of), 'to come 'home again for the pleasure of such a meeting 'with you and Count D'Orsay'; the reference was to a certain 'happy Monday' he had spent with them the week before.

Happy Mondays, or other days for that matter, were soon to be no longer possible at Gore House. About the last of March, 1849, a sheriff's officer contrived by a clever trick to get within

doors. He was not a 'Howell and James young 'man' as the operatic melody has it, but I read in Molloy that he represented the interests of the celebrated firm. D'Orsay left town at once, accompanied by his valet armed with a single portmanteau. Lady Blessington wrote John Forster that 'Count D'Orsay was called to Paris so sud-'denly that he had not time to take leave of any 'of his friends.' By the middle of April she herself and her two nieces had arrived in France.

'The Times' of Monday May 7, 1849, tells the story, though not as it would be told to-day. On page sixteen at the head of the fourth column are two advertisements, in the first of which Mr. Phillips of 73, New Bond Street offers for sale by auction 'the improved lease of the capital mansion 'known as Gore House' (a full description of the property follows); in the second 'Mr. Phillips begs 'to announce that he is honoured with instruc-'tions from the Right Hon. the Countess of Bless-'ington (retiring to the continent) to submit to 'sale by auction, this day May 7, and 12 subse-'quent days, at 1 precisely each day, the splendid 'Furniture, costly jewels, and recherché Property 'contained in the above mansion,' and so forth, and so forth, to the extent of some eighteen or twenty lines.

During the three days prior to the sale 'twenty 'thousand persons' are said to have visited the house; the estimate seems large. Molloy attempts a description of the scene. The reader will do well to supplement it with the fifty-ninth chapter of *Dombey and Son*, where the breaking up of a great house is described with a vividness not easily to be matched.

Thackeray wrote Mrs. Brookfield that he had 'just come away from a dismal sight; Gore House 'full of snobs looking at the furniture.' There were present a number of 'odious bombazine 'women' whom he particularly hated. Also brutes who kept their hats on in the kind old drawing-room; 'I longed to knock some of them off, and 'say, "Sir, be civil in a lady's room."' A French valet who had been left in charge, and with whom Thackeray talked a little, saw tears in the great novelist's eyes. Thackeray confessed to Mrs. Brookfield that his heart so melted toward the poor man that he had to give him a pound; the heart in question was always melting, and the purse was invariably affected.

The sale of the pictures, plate, and jewels did not a little towards cancelling Lady Blessington's debts. Her portrait by Lawrence and that of Wellington by D'Orsay were bought by the Marquis

of Hertford and may be viewed by the curious, the one in the Wallace Collection, the other in the National Portrait Gallery. Everything was scattered and the house was put for a time to inglorious uses, being turned into a restaurant during the Great Exhibition of 1851. Later it was entirely swept away. Now the Albert Memorial Hall occupies a part of the site.

Lady Blessington did not long survive the breaking-up of Gore House. She died on June 4, 1849, just after having installed herself in her new home, an apartment in the Rue du Cerq, and not quite two months from the date of her leaving England. She was buried at Chambourcy, in a mausoleum built after Count D'Orsay's design. There are two mortuary inscriptions on the wall above her sarcophagus, one by Barry Cornwall, and one (in Latin) by Walter Savage Landor.

D'Orsay is buried in a tomb by the side of his friend. He outlived her by a little more than three years. He had opened a studio and set resolutely to work, producing among other things a statue of Jérôme Bonaparte, and busts of Lamartine, Émile de Girardin, and Louis Napoleon. But his health soon failed and the appointment to the directorship of Fine Arts came a little too late to be of any great encouragement. At the time of

his death much was said of him in the papers, and not a little has been written since, both in praise and blame. The most cruel sarcasms were, as a matter of course, uttered by his countrymen; the English have always rather liked Count D'Orsay.

There is no place for a Brummell or a D'Orsay in the society of the present time, but sixty and a hundred years ago there was a place. These men can hardly be blamed for being that which their age approved and their genius made them. D'Orsay was a more amiable man than Brummell, but he was not, in the 'quality' they both professed, anything like so great a figure. The excellent 'heart' for which he is so often commended stood in the way of his becoming the 'sublime dandy.' A man who will deliberately select the plainest girls in the ball-room to dance with, because he wants to add to their pleasure, is too unselfish to play a great part in the tragi-comedy of social life. Brummell would not have known whether a girl was plain or pretty; he would have known only himself. This is not only the artistic but the perfectly correct attitude, looking at it as we must from a technical point of view. The 'sublime dandy' cannot afford to indulge himself in sentiment. As the 'star' of a great dramatic company he must

have the centre of the stage; he is bound to be an egoist by the laws of art. If he dances with a plain girl it must be for his own sake, not for hers. Herein lies a clue to the secret of Thackeray's contempt for Brummell; Thackeray, who knew as well as Shakespeare that the world 's a stage, could not help mixing up the idea of the actor and the man.

D'Orsay, when reverses came upon him, made a better fight than Brummell. To praise him for his courage in this means that we are forgetting the dandy while we admire the man. The Englishman played his part consistently through to the end, never confounding his public and private functions. When he lost his place in the brilliant metropolitan company he became, as one might say, a strolling player, and was seen on the provincial stage at Calais and at Caen. What looks like a shameless mendicancy on Brummell's part was not that at all, if we can but bring ourselves to regard his attitude and conduct with some sense of humor. We do not call it shameless mendicancy when a 'decayed actor' intimates to friends that in view of past services to art he ought to have a benefit. Neither do the friends so misname the request. On the contrary they consult with other friends and the benefit is arranged as promptly as may be.

Brummell's right to a benefit is indisputable; but if it be suggested that he exercised his right oftener than was becoming, why then, there is a good deal to be said. Our French essayist, Boulenger, in praising his compatriot at the expense of 'cette froide marionette' who was called Brummell, exaggerates the value of the merely human qualities in the making of a dandy. They are less to the purpose than he thinks. On the other hand, a superb self-possession and a glacial indifference are the very core of the art as Brummell practised it. The Frenchman was the better fellow of the two, but the Englishman was the greater genius.

We may not care for the type that these men represented; but that is our own affair, it being in general permitted us to study what we most affect. The age in which they lived — the Regency and the earliest Victorian period — was tolerant of them. Perhaps we can afford to be a little amused by what was intensely amusing to its own generation. And if we must have a higher motive there is always the plea for these studies that the doings and sayings of the dandies are a part of the history of manners, and that a knowledge of their ways is more or less essential to one who would form a correct and vivid picture of the times.

EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF A NOBLE POET (LORD BYRON)

I

LIKED the Dandies,' wrote Byron in his memorandum-book; 'they were always very civil to 'me, though in general they dis-'liked literary people'; they not only pestered Monk Lewis (who was fair game), but even made a victim of Madame de Staël. The poet attributed what favor he found in their sight to his having had 'a tinge of 'dandyism' in his youth, and retaining enough of it at twenty-five 'to conciliate the great ones.' Besides having gone through the prescribed course for the making of a man of the world he was quite free from pedantry, not overbearing, and in consequence 'we ran quietly together.'

Byron took real pride in his relation to the singular race of men of whom he is speaking. They made him, as he notes, a member of Watier's, 'a 'superb club at that time,' and, he might have added, with no taint of Grub Street about it, since

there were among their number but two men of letters besides himself, Spencer and Moore, both of whom were also men of the world. He mentions his other clubs in this connection; he belonged to thirteen, including 'The Cocoa Tree,' 'The Alfred,' 'The Pugilistic,' and 'The Owls,' otherwise known as 'Fly-by-night'; also, 'though 'last *not least*,' to the Italian 'Carbonari.'

There is a modern touch in one of his letters which the brave men who have to do with the management of clubs will hardly be able to read without emotion. Byron reports that the cook (of 'The Alfred') has run away leaving the members liable, 'which makes our committee very plain-'tive,' as well it might. Worse yet, the head serving-man has the gout, and the new cook is none of the best. On the latter point, however, the writer speaks from report, 'for what is cookery 'to a leguminous-eating ascetic?'

Byron's connection with the dandies began after his return from the East, probably towards the close of 1811. At their masquerade he wore the habit of a Caloyer or Eastern monk—'a dress 'particularly well calculated to set off the beauty 'of his fine countenance,' says Moore. He was doubtless present at the fête given by the four chiefs of the dandies at the Argyle Rooms, in July,

By courtesy of John Murray. *Emery Walker, Ltd., Photo.*

BYRON

Byron was almost too literary to be a complete dandy. He liked reading and writing, harmless pursuits to which the dandies were but little given. Yet other ways he had of enjoying himself, ways unknown and inconceivable to them. For while the dandies were social or nothing, he was both social and solitary.

1813, when the Prince cut two of his hosts, Brummell and Mildmay, and was surprised at their not taking it in good part. But it is quite clear that while his relations with the fraternity were pleasant and he felt at home with them, Byron did not regard himself as one of their number.

A possible explanation is that Byron was almost too literary to be a complete dandy. He liked reading and writing, harmless pursuits to which the dandies were but little given. Yet other ways he had of enjoying himself, ways unknown and inconceivable to them. For while the dandies were social or nothing, he was both social and solitary. He could endure being alone, they clung together as if life depended on their not losing sight of one another; and in a sense it did. A dandy who detached himself from the group was a person to be watched by his friends; he might be meditating suicide.

With all his taste for solitude Byron understood the dandies perfectly. He had numerous points of contact with them. Many of their pleasures and their vices were also his.

In the remarkable picture of London life which Moore's *Byron* gives us, no feature is quite so amazing as the touchiness of these men (and of most men) with regard to what they called their

honor. They had that virtue and also the means of defending it. Everybody knew how to shoot and had every reason to think that sooner or later the knowledge would come into play. Authors were as bellicose as the rest of mankind. Moore and Jeffrey actually 'met,' but did each other no harm. The friendship between Byron and Moore (a friendship highly creditable to them both, and of much importance to literature since a fine piece of biographical writing was the outcome) began with a request on Moore's part for 'satisfaction'; he was aggrieved by something he found in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. And there was yet another demand awaiting Byron on his return to England; a Colonel Greville found, or thought he found, in the satire, lines that reflected on his character.

Not every demand for satisfaction resulted in a duel. A gentleman might be perfectly willing to fight, but no less ready to make peace. The compounding of these difficulties was an art in itself. Interested friends undertook to bring the antagonists together, and the amount of diplomacy used to that end would have settled affairs of state. The business would be laughable were it not that so many tragedies resulted when affairs of honor came up.

There is an entry in Byron's Journal, too long and too frank for quotation, which gives some idea of the condition of polite society in the London of 1812; for to that period of his life the paragraphs seem to refer, though they were written somewhat later. He was called in as mediator or second at least twenty times, always in violent quarrels, which he contrived to settle 'without 'compromising the honour of the parties, or lead-'ing them to mortal consequences.' He had to deal with 'hot and haughty spirits, — Irishmen, game-'sters, guardsmen, captains and cornets of horse, 'and the like.'

He not only carried challenges from gentlemen to noblemen, from captains to captains, and from lawyers to counsellors, but he once had the extraordinary experience of being messenger from a clergyman to an officer of the Life Guards. We know on the authority of Barry Lyndon that 'there 'has been hardly a mischief done in this world 'but a woman has been at the bottom of it,' and this particular quarrel was no exception. A woman was at the bottom of it, and bitterly disappointed she felt because the rivals allowed themselves to come to an understanding. 'Though 'my clergyman was sure to lose either his life 'or his living,' says Byron, 'he was as warlike

'as the Bishop of Beauvais, and would hardly be 'pacified.'

The incident throws a queer side-light on the manners of the time. Duelling clergymen were probably not to be met with in every parish, but that there should have been one is a fact worthy of remark.

Many other side-lights, on English life in general and on the great world of London in particular, are to be had from the handsome pair of quarto volumes first published in 1830, by John Murray of Albemarle Street, under the title of *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron with Notices of his Life*. There are fifteen hundred pages in the work (lacking just seven), and were there any less it would be a great pity.

Moore's *Byron*, as they who read real books very well know, is one of the best biographies in the English language. Even its faults, if faults they be, endear it. Saintsbury, one of Moore's admirers, thinks it, for example, a prodigious mistake on the author's part 'to drop the pen of the biographer 'now and then, and thump the cushion of the 'preacher, an exercise which suited the genial 'Thomas uncommonly ill.' That is by no means so certain. The 'genial Thomas' was a good man though a gay one, and believed as he wrote. Why

should he not thump the cushions if he wanted to? In his day it was permitted a biographer to be didactic, and the book is an expression of the times as well as of the author's genius.

It was a clever piece of work to have been done at the time the author did it, with echoes of the angry controversy over Byron's private life still ringing in the air. Moore was not the man willingly to wound any one, but writing as he did when half the persons referred to in his pages were living, he was forced to be wonderfully discreet. His caution about printing names gives a piquancy to the narrative. The reader wonders who is meant by Lord A——, and Lady B——; he would be glad to know the identity of the beauty whose name is concealed under a row of four stars, the girl (or woman) with the long lashes and the half-shut eyes, out of which she pretended *not* to see. He may if he likes turn to Prothero's six volumes and solve the mystery and other mysteries at once; but if he is wise the reader will let Moore tell Byron's story in his own way. One does not need to know everything at once. The little blanks and long omissions, the asterisks and dashes, have the pleasant effect of stimulating one's interest.

No part of the biography is better reading than that which concerns Byron's London life from

July, 1811, up to the date of his marriage. The figure we see, as we turn the pages, is an amiable one rather than otherwise, perfectly human at all events, not the monstrous *poseur* of popular legend and the manuals of English literature.

He went everywhere, met everybody, and was amused and interested in everything. We hear of him at one of Coleridge's lectures, but not on the occasion when the speaker 'attacked the "Pleas-'ures of Hope," and all other pleasures whatso-'ever.' We see him with Moore at one of his old haunts, Steven's chop-house, gravely watching his companion's earnest assault on a beef-steak, and presently coming out with, 'Moore, don't you 'find eating beef-steak makes you ferocious?' He spends a day in prison with Leigh Hunt, who was serving a two years' sentence for calling the Prince Regent a 'fat Adonis of fifty' (a harmless remark that many a beau would have taken for a compliment), and making the period of incarceration rather pleasant by the aid of books, pictures, a piano, and a trellised garden to take his walks in. Whoever cares for a time to lay the spectre of a misanthropic and piratical Byron, of which we have had rather too much for our comfort, may do so by an attentive perusal of just these pages. At the time when he was becoming famous, with

as yet no prospect of becoming notorious, Byron was an exceedingly attractive and entertaining personage.

He complains of having nothing to do; in reality his spare hours seem to be pretty well taken up. The ordinary social engagements of a good-looking young peer must have been fairly numerous at all times, and in the height of the season oppressive from their mere number. Byron pronounced these gatherings in drawing-rooms futile, just as other men have been known to do; but the perfectly natural remark has been, in his case, credited to the legendary Byron of dark thoughts and solitary ways, and made far more of than it deserves.

As he would n't eat and could n't dance, he was forced to amuse himself after a fashion of his own, though not peculiarly his own. One day he is sparring with his old friend Jackson, the professional pugilist, and is so pleased and benefited by the exercise that he decides to 'renew his acquaint-'ance with the muffles.' ('Memo. to attend the 'pugilistic dinner — Marquis Huntley is in the 'chair.') Another day he is to be found with Scrope Davies at the 'Cocoa Tree' for one of those long talks and deep potations such as young dandies liked, and in which neither their fathers nor mothers saw any great harm. Byron wanted to

fetch Davies away in his carriage at midnight, but that worthy refused to budge, and was left 'tipsy 'and pious on his knees.'

On yet another day the poet is deep in a new book 'by that most entertaining and researching 'writer, Israeli,' a book about authors, whom he discovers to be 'an irritable set.' He feels for the moment (and only for the moment) ashamed of an alliance with the thin-skinned gentry, and quotes Falstaff's 'I 'll not march through Coven-'try with them, that 's flat.' As we know, he *did* march all his life, and often with nerves as ill covered as the poorest of his literary brethren.

He had at this time a marked tenderness for young authors who commended themselves to his notice, and took some trouble to make J. H. Reynolds's first contact with the world of reviewers as easy as possible; no budding poet could hope to be pelted with rose-leaves. He pronounces the lad 'clever,' and while there are faults in his verse, 'I 'hate discouraging a young one.' This is friendly, though it is permitted to smile at the venerable air that Byron assumes; the 'young one' was in years about twenty and the old one twenty-six.

Byron shows himself (in the letters as edited by Moore) not wholly impatient under the attacks made on him by the Tory press apropos of his

lines 'To a Lady Weeping.' Certain bitter verses aimed at him he thinks suitable to his case inasmuch as they 'halt exceedingly.' What brutalities were held legitimate in journalism may be inferred from a letter of Byron's to Murray: 'I see all the papers in a sad commotion with 'those eight lines; and the Morning Post, in par-'ticular, has found out that I am a sort of Richard 'III,—deformed in mind and *body*. The *last* piece 'of information is not very new to a man who passed 'five years at a public school.'

It was during this squabble with the 'newspa-'per esquires' that Byron had the terrible charge laid at his door of taking large sums of money for his writings. The crime is one of which poets as a class may be pronounced guiltless, though they would gladly sin that way. It was an odd turning of the tables on the satirist of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* who five years since had accused Walter Scott of the same thing, to the Northern bard's surprise and not in the least to his discomfiture; why should he not take money for his verses, Scott asked good-humoredly.

In brief there is a great deal to admire in the Byron of this period; nor is it necessary to search out the points, they obtrude themselves. His attitude toward many of his contemporaries does him

credit. A chapter might be written on his relations to Rogers, Sheridan, Lord Holland, Erskine, Madame de Staël (whom the plain British citizen called 'Mrs. *Stale*') and many others besides these. Byron adored Sheridan's wit. His admiration for that most versatile genius found voice in a brief and perfect eulogy that will be quoted as long as the language lasts. His letters to Lord Holland show real heart as well as becoming gratitude. Moore he positively loves, as well he might. The author of 'The Last Rose of Summer' was a lovable man.

Byron's estimate of his own poetical gift compared with that of Moore, and especially with that of Rogers, is at this epoch of his career modest. We know that he became in one day the talk of London, through the publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Nevertheless he has in his letters the air of being astonished at what had befallen him, rather than puffed up. He does not call the public an ass for buying his books (that last grand pose of the literary poseur), and he is as far as possible from assuming that the public's attitude is no more than a just tribute to transcendent powers.

A young man who in the face of vociferous adulation did not sometimes ask himself whether he

might not be a genius, would be less than human. There were facts in Byron's case not to be denied, the enormous sale of the volumes, for example, and the praise of men whose word counted. But in the letters of this feverish period as a whole, — and to judge them other than as a whole would be unfair, — there is, amid the banter, the jesting, the play of mere high spirits, with an occasional burst of spleen, a deeper tone of modest sincerity very pleasant to him who has an ear for it.

II

In spite of the royal welcome given *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron worried somewhat over the possible fate of its successor. He wrote Murray, his publisher, that he was 'tremulous about '*The Giaour*.' He had his reasons for being so. *The Giaour* was a poem in fragments, like Rogers's *Columbus*, and a study of the public mind led Byron to think that a 'general horror' prevailed of poems in fragments. Murray was bent on publishing the piece, however, as the author reminds him; 'But as I consented, whatever be its fate, I 'won't quarrel with you, even though I detect it 'in my pastry; but I shall not open a pie without 'apprehension for some weeks.'

Byron gives here a variant on the long-standing

joke of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which assumed that poets and pastry-cooks were, as a matter of course, more or less intimately allied. Times have changed. To-day no self-respecting cook would use poetry to bake pies on, even if the booksellers could supply it. But cooks of the Georgian era were not so particular.

Instead of finding its way to the bake-shops, as Byron pretended to fear that it might, *The Giaour* went into the homes of a multitude of readers, mostly in the world of fashion and wealth; for the poet was a lord, and Murray did not aim to print books that could be sold for a song. While the reception was generally cordial there were quarters where the poem was looked upon with a suspicious eye and pronounced dangerous. That was a funny age which tolerated high play, deep drinking, rotten boroughs and gross political nepotism, and thought *The Giaour* dangerous to morals.

Whoever is interested in Byron's relations to his publisher will supplement Moore's narrative at this point with a few chapters of Smiles's *Memoir and Correspondence of the late John Murray* (in two volumes, London, 1891). The eminent bibliopole had a real gift for the management of geniuses and others. There was something truly pastoral in the way he guided his flock. He kept Byron on

a silken tether as long as that wayward and obstreperous author lived. It may well be doubted whether any other publisher could have done as much.

Among the many good paragraphs in Smiles's book is one describing Byron at Murray's shop. Though quite unpretentious it is a vivid bit of writing. The picture it calls up may be considered little short of idyllic. Surely the vision of a publisher reading a poet's verse *to* the poet, and applauding as he reads, is calculated to make unsuccessful rhymesters stare in amazement; unless, indeed, in a sudden accession of scepticism they were to shake their heads and cry, 'Never in this 'world can such things have been.'

An event of the sort did take place at a shop in Fleet Street, opposite St. Dunstan's Church, in the year 1811. Byron used to drop in there while the sheets of *Childe Harold* were going through the press. Being fresh from the fencing-rooms of Angelo and Jackson the poet 'used to amuse 'himself by renewing his practice of "Carte et 'Tierce," with his walking-cane directed against 'the book-shelves, while Murray was reading pas-'sages from the poem, with occasional ejacula-'tions of admiration; on which Byron would say, '"You think that a good idea, do you, Mur-

'ray?" Then he would fence and lunge with his 'walking-stick at some special book which he 'had picked out on the shelves before him. As 'Murray afterward said, "I was often very glad to 'get rid of him."'

Moore lays great stress on the pains Byron took in making changes and corrections in the text of a poem. He was fastidious in his way, though often more fussy than fastidious. A man may correct and correct, and be a careless author still; or at any rate produce the effect of being one. His punctuation gave Byron no end of trouble. Friends told him that he was 'a sad hand' at that sort of thing, and he seems to have believed them. To Murray he writes, 'Do you know anybody who 'can stop — I meant *point* — commas, and so 'forth?' Doctor Johnson had his opinion of the author who would call in outside help when troubled about 'commas and so forth'; but the Doctor was apt to be severe.

Byron's difficulties were not confined to getting his text the way he wanted it; the printers took pleasure in making emendations on their own account, as printers sometimes will, and to Byron's great wrath. His bursts of anger at these craftsmen were frequent, are delightful to read about, and seem to have been unavailing.

When objurgation failed to make any impression he would try irony, as if that weapon could be expected to penetrate the hide of a really dense compositor. Moore giggles over one of Byron's marginal notes on a proof-sheet. Says the poet, with tragic despair, 'Do *not* omit words — it is 'quite enough to alter or mis-spell them.' In an epistolary diatribe addressed to Murray he cries, 'I do believe the devil never created or perverted 'such a fiend as the fool of a printer. . . . There 'is one mistake he made, which, if it had stood, 'I would most certainly have broken his neck.'

The hot poet required a great deal of soothing, and his publisher was the man to soothe him. For his own sake, to lessen the wear and tear of dealings with men of letters, it is to be hoped that Murray had a sense of humor. If he had he must have enjoyed seeing the nobility rage, and barons imagine such a vain thing as getting a poem born into the world without one typographical error.

While not forgetting that Byron was 'an ex-'ample of the literary temperament at its boiling-'point,' we must note that he was also stimulated to write by plain vulgar success, as a man of but a tenth his powers might have been stimulated. In one respect at least he resembled Jane Highmore the novelist, in Henry James's story entitled

'The Next Time'; he could not help selling. Whatever he wrote his consumers rose to, just as hers did, and, 'making but a big cheerful bite of 'it, wagged their great collective tail artlessly for 'more.' It should be capital fun to feed a dog or a public that is so easily pleased and so honestly grateful.

Byron found it enjoyable. He wrote and wrote, and did not think more highly of himself than he ought to think for having produced in ten days a poetic romance in nineteen or twenty thousand lines at the rate of two thousand lines a day.

The romance in question was *The Corsair*, published in February, 1814, and declared by the enthusiastic Murray to *be* — 'what Mr. Southey's 'is *called* — *a Carmen Triumphale!*' No publisher is compelled to 'keep a poet'; but he who permits himself that luxury and finds it a source of wealth, may be forgiven the most extravagant demonstrations of joy. Murray's raptures were quite excusable in the light of his having sold ten thousand copies of *The Corsair* on the day of publication. He wrote Byron that never in his recollection had any work, 'since the "Letter of Burke to the 'Duke of Bedford" excited such a ferment.'

Before the 'ferment' over *The Corsair* had entirely subsided, *Lara* was begun, and in less than

five weeks from the day the first lines were composed it was in the hands of the printer. Byron with his *Lara*, and Rogers with his *Jacqueline*, made 'a joint invasion of the public' in August, 1814. The poems were brought out in a single volume. Both were anonymous and readers drew their own conclusions as to merit and authorship.

The two poetic romances of the next year were *The Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina*. Murray's letter acknowledging the receipt of the manuscript deserves to be quoted.

'My Lord,' it begins, 'I tore open the packet 'you sent me, and have found in it a Pearl. It is 'very interesting, pathetic, beautiful — do you 'know, I would almost say moral. I am really 'writing to you before the billows of the passions 'you excited have subsided.' And so on, for seventeen lines more. Happy poet! who could excite billows of passion in a bookseller.

For the copyright of these poems Murray sent the author two notes amounting to a thousand guineas. They were promptly returned, with an admonition about putting temptation in the way of those who might be tempted. Up to this time Byron had taken no money for his verse; what he earned he had regally bestowed on needy friends. He was compelled now to think of another

course, for he was married and in debt. He had, indeed, married an heiress, but his having done so was what increased the activity of his creditors. In the end he accepted the guineas, but not without a deal of hesitation on his part, and of urging on Murray's.

Besides these long works he wrote a number of little pieces, one of which may be mentioned, not for its own sake but for the occasion on which it was produced. When the new Drury Lane Theatre was about to open, the Committee bespoke the help of England's poetic genius to celebrate the event. It was to take the form of an 'Address,' and would be spoken from the stage. The Committee advertised for contributions on August 14, and required them at the hands of would-be contestants by September 10. Bards who could not depend on having a fit of inspiration within the specified period of twenty-seven days were, therefore, in a hopeless case. One hundred and twelve were inspired, if we may trust the statement made in the preface to *Rejected Addresses*, but not to the Committee's satisfaction. Lord Holland then asked Byron to write something, and he did so.

The best outcome of this appeal to the poets of England was not Lord Byron's 'Address,' but

the delightful parodies by Horace and James Smith. There are few wittier pieces in the language, as every one knows who has read 'The 'Baby's Début' (Wordsworth), or 'The Theatre' (Crabbe). There is a world of fun in the others, such as 'Architectural Atoms,' a parody of Busby's translation of Lucretius. Very amusing too are the skits in prose, the 'Hampshire Farm-'er's Address' (Cobbett), 'Johnson's Ghost' and 'The Theatrical Alarm Bell' (Editor of the 'Morning Post').

The parody of Lord Byron is entitled 'Cui 'Bono,' and may be read to advantage in one of the later editions of *Rejected Addresses*, which contain notes by the authors and pictures by Cruikshank. Byron is represented seated in his study, all gloom and glower, spurning at a globe with the toe of his slipper.

The poet's connection with Drury Lane did not end with his writing the 'Address.' He was at one time a member of the Committee of Management, and had to do with the choice of pieces for presentation. The fertility of dramatic authors was as great then as it is to-day. Drury Lane Theatre had five hundred plays on its shelves, and with all this seeming wealth at their disposal the Committee were scouring the United Kingdom in

search of something that could be acted. Very laughable is Byron's account of the extraordinary people who came to him with their extraordinary dramatic compositions. He had particular joy over one tragedy in which a principal character is chained by the leg to a pillar through two or three acts. Byron felt sure that with a play constructed on this ingenious plan there was some hope of preserving the unities. He enjoyed nagging Moore by reminding him that the author was a countryman of his. 'I tell it you for the honour of Ire-'land.'

In addition to other activities of the year 1814, Byron had been falling in love, or persuading himself that he had. Some fatal impulse at all events was urging him towards matrimony. He aspired to the hand of the young woman who, in his whole circle of acquaintance, was the least fitted to make him content, or to be made so by an alliance with him. She was the only daughter of Sir Ralph Milbanke of 'Seaham' near Stockton-on-Tees; her mother, Judith Noel, was a daughter of Viscount Wentworth. Byron had proposed to her once and been rejected. They kept up a correspondence. He proposed a second time and was accepted.

Miss Milbanke is said to have been a spoiled

child, who not only had her own way, but was very set in whatever way she had. She was both pretty and intelligent. Byron speaks of her extraordinary innocence. It is to be hoped that her parents were as innocent as she. Otherwise an explanation is needed of how two people came to permit their only daughter, 'a paragon of virtue,' to marry a young nobleman who, if we may believe the reports, was notorious for being a loose liver. There was no more conspicuous man in London than the author of *Childe Harold;* what was not known of his character and habits might easily have been learned.

Women have sometimes married men in order to reform them. Perhaps Byron married Anne Isabella Milbanke partly in order to be reformed by her.

He was nervous at the time of the wedding, and that is no crime. To have been otherwise might argue a lack of sensibility, though it was permitted him to feign a serenity of spirit he was not conscious of. The wedding ceremonial is for many men a strain on the nerves. To meet the strain they fortify themselves in various ways. Some drink strong drinks, others laugh and joke, or even pray. Carlyle read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.* Whatever means Byron may have taken

to hearten himself up was of no avail; he betrayed his nervousness by making wrong responses.

To read a sinister import into his having addressed the bride as 'Miss Milbanke' after the ceremony, is to magnify trifles. His own wedding was not the first at which he had shown himself awkward. When he was called on to give away the bride, at the marriage of Miss Hanson to the Earl of Portsmouth, he joined the left hands of the pair; which shows that he lacked either self-possession, or practice, or both.

He was cheerful enough in the first months of wedded life if one may judge by the tone of his letters. To be sure his father-in-law's monologues bored him (at such times as the two happened to be together), and he hated afternoon tea; but these were petty miseries. Just before his migration with his wife to London, Byron pictured himself comically to Moore as he would appear by this time to-morrow, 'stuck in a chariot with my chin on 'a band-box.' And there was a jesting allusion to another carriage 'for the abigail, and all the trumpery which our wives drag along with them.' He had already formed a plan for an excursion to Italy with a side-trip to Greece, in which Moore should join him, and then 'think of all the poesy where-withal we should overflow. . . . If I take my wife,

'you can take yours; and if I leave mine, you may 'do the same. "Mind you stand by me, in either 'case, Brother Bruin."'

The Byrons settled in London at 13 Piccadilly Terrace. Their only child, Augusta Ada, was born on December 10, 1815. A month later Byron wrote Moore, who had inquired after the infant's welfare, that 'she was, and is, very flour- 'ishing and fat, and reckoned very large for her 'days — squalls and sucks incessantly. Are you 'answered?'

Ten days after this letter was written Lady Byron departed with her child on a visit to her mother in Leicestershire. The poet never saw either of them again. If the news that she had left him was a surprise to his friends, it was a greater surprise to himself. Strained as the relations between them had become, he had no idea that everything was to end so quickly, and in the way it did. Lady Byron gave no hint of her purpose when she left London.

Society became aware of the falling-out of husband and wife, and took sides in the dispute; presently the general public asserted its right to meddle with the affair. Unpleasant incidents occurred, and of a sort to persuade Lord Byron that his popularity was waning.

Too much has been made, however, of the public demonstrations against him. They were neither so many, nor so marked, nor yet so significant as biographers with an eye for the picturesque would lead us to think. One ugly incident that is often told never took place at all; Hobhouse should be an authority, and he many years since denied that Byron was insulted in the street, or was hissed as he went to the House of Lords.

An actress with whom his name was associated is said to have been hooted off the stage. This may easily have happened. The mistaken biographical attitude consists in treating the episode as if it were exceptional, as if an audience had never hooted anybody before, and did so now to show that its fine moral sense was outraged. The antics of the British theatrical public were often extraordinary. For a proof of the statement read Byron's own account of the behavior of the pit on a first night performance of a tragedy, in April, 1815. When in the fifth act the player who impersonated the King fell upon his knees to pray, 'the audience got upon their legs '— the damnable pit — and roared, and groaned, 'and hissed, and whistled.' They quieted a little only to break out afresh. The curtain fell on the last act and Kean came forward to make an announcement, but he could not be heard the din was

so great. The actress who spoke the epilogue was frightened to the extent of well-nigh losing her voice.

All this because the pit disliked the tragedy, and for nothing else. Yet the author was a woman of irreproachable character and the players were popular favorites. An audience that would behave like a pack of roaring college students, in April, 1815, would behave no otherwise (given an occasion) in February or March, 1816. If outraged moral sense had something to do with the demonstration against Mrs. Mardyn, it is certain that mere mob playfulness had quite as much, perhaps a good deal more, to do with it.

When Byron told the world why he left England, and used the famous simile of 'the stag at 'bay, who betakes himself to the waters,' he gave a new turn and a powerful impetus to the Byronic legend. We can see the myth in the making. By a mere figure of speech, though a vigorous one and sincere enough in the anger that informs it, he threw a romantic light on his story which has dazzled and blinded all his Continental devotees, possibly a few of his own countrymen as well. It is the high privilege of poets to be figurative, but one is not bound to take their rhetoric for the literal truth.

III

To say that he was driven out of England is rather absurd. No German or Frenchman can write on Byron without saying it, and that, too, irrespective of the facts; the poet *must* be represented as a victim of popular fury, as an unwilling exile from his native land. The legendary Byron is too dear to the heart of a Continental critic ever to be surrendered.

A glance at Byron's letters and journals from 1811 on for two or three years will show that he was eager to leave England almost from the moment of his return. There is nothing very wonderful in this. He was young, only twenty-three, a miracle of vitality and restlessness, and being, moreover, a thorough Englishman, he was devoured by the notorious English lust of travel and adventure. His heart was always over the seas. Night and day he was thinking of what he had seen and experienced in the Levant.

From month to month he was detained in his own country by this thing or that — business, literature, friends, amusements, yet meditating flight all the time. In December, 1812, he thought it 'by no means improbable' that he would go abroad in the spring. When April came he knew

he was going, and must have Hobhouse's new quarto 'to take abroad with him.' (Fancy travelling in the society of a quarto! Byron never cared how much impedimenta he had about him.) In June he ordered letters sent to Portsmouth, presumably that he might get them when he went there to take ship.

His plan fell through and other plans were made, to fall through in their turn. At the last of August he was still in England, interested, busy with a new poem, his popularity unabated, and himself of precisely the same mind that he had been for months; he was eager to go away somewhere, 'but where to go' now that rumors of the Plague were in the air, though he feared the epidemic far less than he did the miseries of quarantine. He had an idea of running over to Holland, to see how a canal looked after the Bosphorus, making a little preliminary trip to fill in time before embarking on the great pilgrimage, as a hungry man might eat one olive in the hope of staying his stomach until dinner-time.

His every thought flies eastward, and if the Plague abates and his affairs take on a proper shape, to the East will he hie himself. Read in his journal the comical account of a visit to the menagerie at Exeter 'Change, the hippopotamus

'like Lord L——l in the face,' the bear with 'the very voice and manner of my valet,' and the elephant who behaved so well and was so intelligent that Byron wished he had him for a butler. And there was one beast that almost gave him a fit of homesickness. The sight of the camel 'made me pine for Asia Minor.' 'Oh, quando te 'aspiciam?' he cries. Truly is he enamoured of the East whom the sight of a camel in a stuffy London menagerie can move to quote — or rather to misquote — Horace.

It was nothing more mysterious than restlessness that possessed Byron. Like the Belgian omnibus-driver of *An Inland Voyage* he longed to be somewhere else and see the round world before he died. What he had already seen only whetted his appetite for more of the same sort. He did not think it likely, when once he had left England, that he would return. A not too romantic scheme he cherished was to sell Newstead and take up his abode at Naxos in the Grecian Archipelago, adopt the Eastern costume and study Oriental literatures; and he was forever contrasting the expense of life in England with the cheapness and barbaric simplicity there. Had he elected to put his project through it might have been to his advantage; he would have been warmer if not happier.

Byron was not only depressed to some extent in an England of gray and down-pouring skies, but he was physically uncomfortable. To Hodgson he wrote, 'Your climate kills me,' though he really had no right to shirk his responsibilities in that way, the climate being as much his as it was Hodgson's. 'Rain and mist are worse than a si-'rocco' is one of his complaints. He grins in his misery and makes an honest attempt to bear it; as when, after a night of bad dreams he awoke in bodily pain but got himself 'wound up for the 'day,' and having accomplished so much, 'I will 'go out of doors and see what the fog will do for 'me.'

Unfortunately it was not in his power to become lyric over a fog. He longed for that which is so rare in England that the newspapers respectfully publish accounts of where it has been seen and how long it was visible. 'Give me a *sun*, I 'care not how hot,' cries Byron, 'and a sherbet, I 'care not how cool.'

In a word Byron knew cold when he felt it, which is more than a number of his hardy countrymen know. They freeze and make no sign. He could be sympathetic with the few who were like himself. That was an amusing outburst in his journal about Lady Holland's screen which she

would keep between the whole room-full of diners and the fire. He himself was 'absolutely petrified 'and could not even shiver.' As for the rest they 'looked as if they were just un-packed, like salmon 'from an ice-basket, and set down to table for that 'day only.' When Lady Holland left the room Byron 'dismissed' the screen, studying the faces of the men as he did so; 'every cheek thawed and 'every nose reddened with the anticipated glow.'

By his own confession he could bear cold no better than an antelope. He was disposed to anathematise the climate of England, forgetting how much the climate had done to make heroes and martyrs. But a man who feels as he felt is bound to change his skies as soon as possible. The wonder is, not that Byron went when he did, but that he did not go long before. And it is impossible to read the story of his life without wishing that he had.

That Byron, after his wife left him and he had become temporarily unpopular, found it expedient as well as agreeable to go to the Continent, may be admitted without question, but that he was forced to go is more than doubtful. Thomas Raikes was not likely to be wrong in his view of the matter. Himself one of the dandies he knew the society well, and he knew something of the

man. It annoyed Raikes to have Byron's romantic admirers on the Continent canonize him 'as a 'martyr to calumny and oppression; while those 'who remember certain dinners at Watier's in the 'olden time, certain long potations with John 'Kemble, Brummell, and other *virtuosi*, have no 'faith in the affected misanthropy, and only recol- 'lect an agreeable companion, — the *bon convive* '*qui boit sec*.'

Raikes believed that Byron might have remained with perfect security in England if his restless spirit would have permitted it; 'he might 'have reaped every honour from his talents in the 'senate, or his poetical pursuits in the closet; and 'notwithstanding the faults which he complains 'were so unjustly visited upon him, he might have 'been what he pleased in society, the idol or the 'tyrant of the *grand monde*. The time has long 'gone by (and daily examples prove it) when vice 'or misconduct could serve to exclude a man of 'rank and fashion from the highest and most dis- 'tinguished circles in London.'

One may conclude, then, from what the diarist and ex-dandy says, that had Byron stubbornly remained right where he was when his troubles came to a head, he might have lived them down as other men had done before him. What would have been

the effect of such a policy on his poetic life is a question, but it seems quite clear that as a man Byron could not have made a bad state of (strictly private) affairs the worse by remaining. He went because his heart was not in England and never had been, a rather unfortunate case, over which the Continental biographers exult as if it were immensely to the poet's credit and they themselves had had a hand in bringing it about. It is none the less a fact that Byron was ill at ease in his own country. There was no moment during the past five years when he was not straining at whatever ties bound him there.

One must not forget, in passing, the allusion to this celebrated affair in *Nightmare Abbey*. The light and mocking tone in which Peacock treats it was to be expected from one who stood, in point of time, so near the event, and for whom a nobleman's domestic broils were not of paramount importance. Mr. Cypress, of the novel, is Byron as Peacock chose to picture him in the year 1816. This gentleman has announced to his friends at Nightmare Abbey his intention of going abroad. When Scythrop points out the good an Englishman of rank and genius may do by remaining in his own country and giving his help in the struggle against a nation's domestic enemies, Mr. Cypress

replies, 'Sir, I have quarrelled with my wife; and 'a man who has quarrelled with his wife is absolved 'from all duty to his country. I have written an ode 'to tell the people as much, and they may take it 'as they list.'

In one of the other speeches that Peacock puts into his mouth, Mr. Cypress pleads as a reason for going that 'the mind is restless.' Thomas Raikes, as we have seen, used about the same words when a dozen years later he penned his description of the Byron he remembered,—the Byron of the London clubs, the boon companion of the dandies. It was a man whom a restless spirit kept in perpetual turmoil.

Byron sailed from Dover for Ostend on April 25, 1816. He took with him Fletcher his valet, young Robert Rushton, a Swiss servant by the name of Berger, and as a travelling companion John Polidori, M.D., a rather silly and emotional youth who made his patron a deal of trouble first and last. That the poet in setting out on his travels should have taken four people with him, two in addition to the pair of servants he generally had, is represented by Karl Elze as a manifesto; it was a part of Byron's defiance of the society that had outlawed him. Only a German professor could have read so deep a meaning into so unimportant

a detail. What matter it made to society whether his lordship took four servants or one, or in what way society was 'defied' by his taking four rather than one, are points that await clearing up.

Suppose, however, that when Byron went abroad he had added Mrs. Mule to his splendid retinue; might not the act have been interpreted as one of defiance? He left her behind, and of her later history the books have nothing to say. His friends were not as few as in his anger he made himself believe; but had there been only one person in England to mourn his departure, that one would certainly have been Mrs. Mule.

She was his fire-lighter, as he calls her. He found her at Number 4, Bennet Street, when he took lodgings there. A forlorn creature and appalling to look upon, she was faithful and she could make her master laugh. With her 'gaunt and 'witch-like appearance' it is no wonder if she became, in Moore's phrase, 'the perpetual scare-crow 'of his visitors.' When Byron moved into Lord Althorpe's chambers in 'The Albany' his friends took it for granted that he would 'get rid of this 'phantom.' The poet had other ideas and brought the ancient dame along with him.

During his honeymoon Byron wrote to John Murray to keep an eye on his apartment and see

that everything was safe. Murray replied that he had done so, and that the whole establishment carried 'an appearance of security, which 'is confirmed by the unceasing vigilance of your 'faithful and frigid Duenna.' Murray was not a bad hand at an alliteration. 'Faithful and frigid' were epithets that described Mrs. Mule to perfection.

When Lord and Lady Byron set up an establishment in Piccadilly, with the customary force of servants, the formidable old woman disappeared, and visitors concluded rashly that they had seen the last of her. But Moore must be allowed to finish the story in his own charming way: —

'One of those friends, however, who had most 'fondly indulged in this persuasion, happening to 'call one day when all the male part of the estab- 'lishment were abroad, saw to his dismay, the door 'opened by the same grim personage, improved 'considerably in point of habiliments since he last 'saw her, and keeping pace with the increased 'scale of her master's household, as a new peruke, 'and other symptoms of promotion, testified. 'When asked "how he came to carry this old 'woman about with him from place to place," 'Lord Byron's only answer was, "the poor old 'devil was so kind to me."'

The little incident is a pleasant one with which to take leave of the poet. His perversities and worse make the study of his life rather trying at times. But when we are out of patience with him, as well as out of patience with ourselves for being so, we have always Mrs. Mule to fall back on. The image of the ancient dame in her new peruke, confronting the astonished Thomas Moore, who fondly hoped he had seen the last of her, must invariably provoke a smile.

A GIVER OF BREAKFASTS

(SAMUEL ROGERS)

I

THE author of *A Wanderer in London* — a book which has the great merit of being both witty and instructive — says that any one who is run over at the corner of Berkeley Street and Piccadilly 'will have the satisfaction of knowing 'that he shares his fate with the author of *The 'Pleasures of Memory*. Being only a little past 'eighty at the time, Rogers survived the shock 'many years.'

The astonishing old gentleman survived other shocks as well, and generally amazed the London world by a display of 'perpetual youth and untired 'energy.' In 1844 his bank was robbed of two hundred thousand dollars worth of notes, besides specie and securities. One of the partners in the banking business took to his bed in consequence, and the report spread that he would 'not get over 'it.' Rogers went to three dinner-parties that same

week, and made witty remarks on the subject of his losses. Self-control to this extent is, of course, most gratifying to the spectators, and looks as difficult as walking a tight-rope or performing on a trapeze. One stares and exclaims, and asks his neighbor how the fellow contrives to stay up there.

The Ancient of St. James's Place was not to be put down by trifles, such as being run over or robbed. He wore a grim and sardonic air, as of one who intended to see all his coevals off the stage of this life, and marvelled a little at their impudence in delaying to make an exit. In R. M. Milnes's correspondence may be found a thumb-nail sketch of the indomitable old man as he appeared at the age of eighty-six. Writing from Woburn in December, 1849, Milnes says, 'Rogers 'has been here — very cross and very much petted. 'He stumps about most wonderfully, and has lately 'had the gratification of the deaths of several old 'people younger than himself.' A few months later Milnes wrote the same friend that Rogers had broken the socket of his thigh and that it was doubtful whether a short crippled life was worth his having; 'He is quite easy in his mind because 'Luttrell is dying too.'

The implication is that both these clever ones would go off about the same time, and that very

SAMUEL ROGERS

The statement that Rogers's poems had a vogue because their author was 'in society' may still be met with. One comes nearer the truth by turning the statement the other way round. The man was welcomed in the beginning by 'society' because of the poems, and was cherished because of his many social gifts.

presently. It was a mistake, though a natural one. Luttrell was, indeed, dying, but not Rogers, who took the liberty of surviving his old friend by four years.

When the end really came, on December 18, 1855, people were rather astonished. Having lasted so long he ought to have lasted a little longer, they thought. He was not so old, only ninety-two years and four months. Landor did almost as well, with the handicap of a violent temper and many law-suits. But it was freely admitted that Rogers had lived to a very respectable age, and that when he died one of the social landmarks of London disappeared. The public felt lost without him. He had come to be regarded as an institution, and therefore permanent. His removal was like the removal of a public building. People had taken for granted that anything so solidly put together could not be carried off; they were stupefied to find it gone.

That sense of the permanent and the unalterable which Rogers's career gave to onlookers was strengthened by the fact of his having lived so long in one spot. He took up residence in St. James's Place in 1803, and there he remained until his death, a period of fifty-two years. This house was the scene of the famous breakfasts, and of many a

notable dinner and lively supper as well. It is still standing; the number is 22. This aristocratic locality, St. James's Place, has been described as a 'Debrettian backwater,' as the spot to which one might go for a rest-cure. It was not particularly quiet when the writer of these lines last gazed upon it: on the contrary, rather unquiet, owing to the presence of two automobiles that were churning and chugging their merriest. Rogers, who loved dim lights and a minimum of noise, or none at all, was lucky in having lived before motor-cars were invented.

Many descriptions have been written of the house and its treasures. To Byron it seemed the perfect type of the owner's mind and taste. 'There is not a gem, a coin, a book thrown aside on his chimney-piece, his sofa, his table, that does not bespeak an almost fastidious elegance in the possessor. But this very delicacy must be the misery of his existence.' From Clayden's *The Early Life of Samuel Rogers* may be learned in two pages all that a reader needs to know in order to fill out the mental picture of this interesting man's interesting abode. It was not a palace, but for a bachelor there was 'ample room, and verge enough.' Rogers's habit was to take notes of such arrangements as pleased him in the houses he visited; the

ideas he gave his architect and builder to be reproduced were therefore not mere vain imaginings. He designed the furniture himself, with the assistance of Hope's work on the subject, says Clayden; but that must have been later, for Hope's *Household Furniture and Decorations* was not published until 1807. Flaxman executed the mantelpiece in the drawing-room, and was responsible for the general appearance of walls and ceiling. The cabinet for 'antiquities' was designed by Stothard and ornamented with paintings with his own hand. It must not be supposed that great names were invoked for every feature of the work. The wood-carver who had the making of a presumably elaborate sideboard sent one of his journeymen to do a part of the ornamentation. Rogers received the man himself, with drawing in hand. Twenty-five years afterward Chantrey, the now famous sculptor, was dining with Rogers and asked him whether he remembered that incident. Rogers did remember it distinctly. 'Well,' said Chantrey, 'I was that journeyman.' The sideboard was then in the dining-room where the two men sat. Where is it now, we wonder; its associations ought to give it a value apart from the artistic worth.

The books, prints, vases, knick-knacks, drawings, and paintings were what one might expect

to find in the dwelling of a man blessed with Rogers's taste supplemented with the indispensable aid of Rogers's abundant means. His art collections brought a couple of hundred thousand dollars after his death, though it does not follow that it cost him that to get them together. Not everything was sold; the National Gallery profited by his bequests to the extent of three pictures, — a Titian, a Guido, and a Giorgione; and his famous Milton item, the original agreement with the publisher in which the poet accepted five pounds for the copyright of *Paradise Lost*, went to the British Museum.

Rogers's biographer notes that in getting together his collection the poet kept in mind two points, the beauty and worth of an object in itself, and its beauty and worth in relation to other objects. The principle on which he worked was patent to his friends, and his inflexible adhesion to it led Mrs. Norton to say of him that his god was Harmony. How complete was his success only an expert could tell us. He certainly gave his contemporaries the impression of having succeeded perfectly. They gazed on his treasures in their admirable setting, and were content.

The pen-portraits of the man himself are quite as numerous as the descriptions of his home. They

are not, however, as uniformly flattering. Arthur Milman notes among the guests who used to frequent Ashburnham House, his father's London residence, Macaulay, Hallam, Sydney Smith, and 'old Mr. Rogers, with his quiet, pale face.' So extremely pale was that ancient's face that critical observers did not hesitate to pronounce it cadaverous. The comparisons they made and the jests they invented would have been cruel had the object of them been some timid and inoffensive soul. Rogers was not timid, and the adjective inoffensive is the last that one would think of using in connection with a personality as caustic as his.

Rogers must have known how he looked, — men who are ill-favored have many opportunities of learning the world's opinion, — and he must have known what the wits said of him. Milman gives one sample, half concealing it, as it were, in the small print of a footnote. There was on exhibition in London, a panorama of Jerusalem with the Dead Sea in the distance. Lockhart met Sydney Smith there. 'Quite perfect,' said the lively clergyman; 'it only wants one thing — 'Rogers to be seen bathing in the Dead Sea.'

The story of Rogers at the catacombs of Paris exists in two versions. That given in *Gossip of the*

Century has the air of being dressed up by a reporter. We may be sure that no guide would run the risk of losing his place for the joy he might have in a bit of clever impertinence, and he to whom the remark is said to have been addressed was an English gentleman with whom only his closest friends dared to take a liberty. Clayden's version of the incident is that when the visiting party filed out of the catacombs the poet was the last to emerge, and Lord Dudley, shaking him by the hand, said, 'Good-bye, Rogers.'

The variations on the theme are many, and it is our right to be entertained (if we *are* entertained) by reading that Alvanley inquired of Rogers why he did not set up a hearse, since he could well afford it, that a cabman refused to take him as a fare, supposing him to be a ghost, and that when he complained of the difficulty of finding a bed at a crowded watering-place, Ward asked him if there was no room in the church-yard. These were the pleasantries of his intimates, and no sharper than the jests he himself was in the habit of making. 'Mr. Rogers had no pretensions to 'good looks,' wrote one who knew him; 'he was 'very pale and very bald. For all that he looked 'what he was; a benevolent man and a thorough 'gentleman.'

He liked to say a cutting thing and many auditors liked to hear him. There were exceptions, however. Washington Irving wrote Moore that he had dined with Rogers, who on that occasion 'served up his friends as he served up his fish, 'with a squeeze of lemon over each. It was very 'piquant, but it rather set my teeth on edge.'

In a letter of Elizabeth Barrett's, dated December, 1844, may be read the following paragraph: 'A common friend said the other day to Mr. Ken-'yon, "Rogers hates me, I know. He is always 'saying bitter speeches in relation to me, and yes-'terday he said so and so. *But*," he continued, "if 'I were in distress, there is one man in the world 'to whom I would go without doubt and without 'hesitation, at once, and as to a brother, and *that* 'man is *Rogers*." '

The 'common friend' may have been (and probably was) Henry F. Chorley, whom Rogers disliked and took great pains to show that he disliked. Chorley speaks at some length in his *Autobiography* of the sour attitude which the poet maintained towards him, and for which he could not account; and while he does not say that he would have gone to Rogers for himself had he been in trouble, he declares that he would not have hesitated to present to him the cause of 'poor painter,

'poor poet, poor musician, or poor governess.' He knew personally of many acts of munificence done by the man of bitter speech, and done in the most unostentatious way.

Rogers often met Chorley at dinner-parties and regularly snubbed him. The manner of it was about like this. Looking around the table until his eye fell on the musical critic he would say, in a tone penetrating enough to be heard by all, 'Who is that young man with red hair?' Being told now for the third or fourth or possibly the tenth time who the young man was, Rogers would say, 'Never heard of him before.' After which remark he would devote himself to his dinner, 'like one, who having disposed of a nuisance, 'might unfold his napkin and eat his soup in 'peace.'

Chorley always regarded himself as the person to whom Rogers made his 'most gratuitously ill-'natured speech'; and since he was so entirely unruffled by the memory of it, and so obliging as to present himself for our amusement in the light of a victim, we can but thank him and rejoice that the incident took place.

It occurred at a concert-hall. Chorley was seated beside the Dowager Lady Essex, when he saw Rogers creeping down the aisle. Aware that

the old gentleman was particularly fond of the lady by his side, Chorley said to her, 'Now I shall 'give up my place to Mr. Rogers.' He bade her good-night and stooped to find his hat, while Lady Essex called out, 'Come, Mr. Rogers, here is 'a seat for you by me.' The old poet fixed his 'dead eyes' on Chorley, who was doing all he could to make room for him, and said, 'Thank 'you, but I don't like your company.'

Not the least astonishing feature of this anecdote is the information it conveys that there was once a time when a man of letters dared to be uncivil to a journalist.

Chorley had good reason to show a resentment towards the banker-poet which he somehow fails to show; but Edward FitzGerald's detestation of the man whom he calls 'that old Toad Rogers' (a man whom he had never met and with whom he had no relations of any sort) is rather ludicrous. Having seen Byron's satire on Rogers quoted somewhere, FitzGerald went to the trouble of reprinting it, because he had long wished for the verses himself 'and thought others might wish for 'them also.' He sent a copy to his friend Pollock, and almost exulted in the idea that all the banker-poet's little malignities and sentimentalities were dead; 'while Byron's Scourge hangs over his

'Memory.' A rather magniloquent sentence, that last, and not at all in its author's wonted style.

The explanation of FitzGerald's contempt is partly to be found in Rogers's attitude towards Scott. 'Littlegrange' adored the author of the 'Waverley' novels, along with most right-minded men, women, and boys; and it was after reading what Rogers said to Charles Sumner, about Manzoni's *Sposi* being 'worth any ten of Scott's,' that FitzGerald was moved to apply to our Giver of Breakfasts the epithet of 'that Toad.'

The excuse that Rogers made to Henry Taylor for his bitterness and sarcasm, had probably been made many times before. '"They tell me I say 'ill-natured things," he observed in his slow, quiet, 'deliberate way; "I have a very weak voice; and 'if I did not say ill-natured things, no one would 'hear what I say."'

Rogers gave dinner-parties as well as breakfasts. They were small, perfect in their appointments, and the company always of the best. A feature often remarked was the manner of lighting the dining-room. Rogers would have no candles on the table. The light was thrown on the walls and the pictures, elsewhere it was kept as subdued as might be. According to Henry Taylor 'this did 'not suit Sydney Smith, who said that a dinner at

'St. James's Place was "a flood of light on all 'above, and below nothing but darkness and gnash-'ing of teeth." '

For some good reason the fame of the breakfasts well-nigh eclipsed that of Rogers's other entertainments. The dinner-parties were what a fastidious host, who was neither poor nor niggardly, might be expected to give; but the breakfasts were believed to be distinctive and the honor of an invitation was frankly coveted. Macaulay, to whom so many doors were opened at the beginning of his parliamentary life, thought it no small matter to be noticed by Rogers. He wrote his sister that he had met Rogers at the 'Athenæum' and been asked to name his day for a breakfast, and promised as agreeable a party as could be found. 'Very 'kind of the old man, is it not? and, if you knew 'how Rogers is thought of, you would think it as 'great a compliment as could be paid to a Duke.'

Moore was the only other guest on that first occasion and they 'were all on the most friendly 'and familiar terms possible.' But Rogers said they must have their talk out. Another breakfast was given Macaulay two days later (June 26, 1831), and the chief guest pronounced the party 'a re-'markable one.' Lord John Russell, Campbell, Luttrell, and Moore were present and 'very lively.'

Then it was that Campbell quoted the line, 'Ye 'diners-out from whom we guard our spoons,' and credited it to Moore who denied the authorship; whereupon Macaulay acknowledged it as his, and recited the 'Political Georgics' from which it was taken; the guests were 'vociferous' in their praise.

Somewhere in the nine hundred pages of Clayden's *Rogers and his Contemporaries* will be found a reference to the principal breakfasts at St. James's Place in which men of note figured. The student of London social life will do well to turn to the books from which these accounts are taken, in search of details for which the biographer had no room. Merely to rehearse names and dates is to produce an effect of sameness. A little Boswellizing is a help when one cannot have a great deal. One of the pleasant affairs was that recorded by Moore (July 29, 1834) when Lord Lansdowne, Wishaw, and the Duke of Sutherland were guests. Rogers forgot that he had asked Sutherland to come until Lord Lansdowne, who arrived before his brother peer, reminded him that he was expected. 'Asking Dukes and forgetting them,' Moore observed to Rogers, 'is now-a-days the 'poet's privilege.'

In November, 1835, Crabb Robinson breakfasted with Rogers tête-à-tête and remained from

ten until one. They talked of poetry and the host 'spoke very highly of Wordsworth, but with 'qualifications which would not satisfy Words-'worth's admirers.' In February, 1836, Moore was invited to St. James's Place to breakfast with Henry Taylor and young Villiers. The conversation touched on 'various topics' and among them Southey, 'who is a great friend of Taylor's.' In August, 1837, Robinson, Empson, and Wordsworth were the guests, and the author of *The Excursion* set forth 'emphatically' what he expected from posterity in the way of fame, and his demand was more than reasonable.

Sydney Smith's name often occurs in the annals of Rogers's social life. The two wits girded at each other incessantly and were capital friends. The clergyman joked the banker 'as nobody else 'dared.' Clayden gives the amusing anecdote of Smith's going with Rogers and Moore to see Dryden's house. It was a wet day. 'Rogers, always en-'thusiastic about Dryden, got out of the carriage, 'but Moore and Smith refused. "Oh, you see why 'Rogers don't mind getting out," exclaimed Syd-'ney to Moore, "he has got goloshes on; lend 'us each a golosh, Rogers, and we will each stand 'on one leg and admire as long as you please."'

Macaulay believed that Smith's vivacity wearied

Rogers. It is well known that Macaulay's vivacity wearied Smith. At one of the breakfast parties Smith was heard to say to his host, 'I wish I 'could write poetry like you, Rogers. I would 'write an Inferno, and I would put Macaulay 'among the disputants, and *gag* him.'

As the old names appear less and less in the breakfast records, new names appear more and more. With Dickens, Thackeray, and Ruskin we seem to be getting down to modern times. That is a very pretty letter of Thackeray's that Clayden quotes, written from Young Street, Kensington, in June, 1843. The novelist pretends to fear that he is forgotten. 'The moment I had finished my 'work yesterday and had returned to this real 'world, I thought to myself, "Does Mr. Rogers 'remember that he invited me (that is, that I 'asked him to ask me and he asked me) to break-'fast with him on the 30th?" The transaction 'took place at Mr. Sartoris's: in the presence 'of witnesses—and to-morrow is the day.' . . . 'And I give you warning, my dear sir, that this 'visit is hanging over you, and that unless you fly 'from London you can't help hearing my knock 'at your door at 10 to-morrow morning.' For both their sakes it is to be hoped that the knock was given and answered.

A man who attaches any importance to his morning meal cannot avoid a slight feeling of irritation because of the difficulty of finding out what Rogers gave his guests to eat. It is not at all probable that they breakfasted, like the Reverend Doctor Gaster, 'on a mug of buttered ale and an 'anchovy toast'; and they were happily in no danger of having to face that dreary American bill of fare which begins with grape-fruit or oranges and then sinks to an insipid 'cereal.' They may have had poured out to them a certain beverage 'called 'coffee,' for the making and selling of which 'one 'James Farr . . . was in the year 1657 presented 'by the Inquest of St. Dunstan's in the West,' the liquor being looked on in the light of a 'great 'Prejudice and Nuisance to the neighborhood,' as indeed it must have been if it resembled what the innumerable lineal descendants of James Farr in the England of to-day offer the oppressed tourist. That the tea they drank was of the best, we may be sure, and the manner of its serving faultless. But what did they have besides tea? There may be two hundred references in the biographies and memoirs of the nineteenth century to breakfast-parties at Rogers's, and not a word among them all that has a gastronomic bearing. The guests remembered only the conversation, a fact

greatly to their credit. In default of exact knowledge on that other (and grosser) point, we are fain to content ourselves with the belief that Rogers set before his guests not merely a good breakfast but a breakfast 'to invite a man to.'

The statement that Rogers's poems had a vogue because their author was 'in society' may still be met with. One comes nearer the truth by turning the statement the other way round. The man was welcomed in the beginning by 'society' because of the poems, and was cherished because of his many social gifts. *The Pleasures of Memory*, the work which gave him a name, appeared in 1792, when Rogers was an active young man of business and went to and fro almost daily between his home in Stoke Newington and the family bank in Freeman's Court. The first four editions numbered two hundred and fifty copies each; but the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth were a thousand copies each. By the year 1816 more than twenty-two thousand copies had been disposed of, a large sale, we are told, for the times. The most gratifying feature about it for Rogers must have been in the steady growth of popular interest. When, for example, the twelfth edition was called for (1801) it was found necessary to print fifteen hundred copies, and the fourteenth (1803) was raised to

two thousand. 'Society' had very little to do with all this, whereas the real merit of the poem and its manner of hitting the taste of the day had much.

While in a way it is true enough that Rogers was society's poet, he had never aimed at the distinction (such as it was) any more than society had aimed to confer the honor on him. Long before he became a figure in West End drawing-rooms his verse was widely read, its careful art recognized, and the existence of certain durable qualities believed in.

In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809) Byron called on 'melodious Rogers' to rise and strike his 'hallowed lyre,' and by so doing 'Re-'store Apollo to his vacant throne, Assert thy coun-'try's honour and thine own.' What comically stilted language poets used to employ when they became serious. It is worth our while to note that the lines are a testimonial to the general popularity of Rogers's verse, not merely a personal tribute from the young savage and satirist who wrote them.

'Melodious Rogers' had already risen thrice and publicly struck the lyre, once in 1786 with his *An Ode to Superstition, with some other Poems*, again in 1792 with *The Pleasures of Memory*, and

yet again in 1798 with *An Epistle to a Friend.* The books in question were short, the intervals between them long. Bring what charge against him the world might, Rogers was safe from that of poetical garrulousness. A more painstaking writer than he never lived. He confessed once to having spent ten days on a note to one of his couplets. What a wealth of time he must have spent on the couplet itself.

But the world (meaning so much of it as reads poetry) thoroughly enjoyed this artificial verse. It remained loyal to Rogers while admitting the seductive charms of Scott and Byron. The author of *Lara* was flattered by having his romance bound up in the same covers with *Jacqueline*. Jest as he might about 'Larry' and 'Jacquy,' there was no question in Byron's mind as to whether 'Larry' was honored or not by the company in which he found himself. It is important to keep clearly in view that the attitude Byron maintained toward Rogers as a poet (personal and prejudiced though that attitude was) coincided with the world's. The older bard had his private peak in Parnassus, a remote, cold, yet lofty eminence which it was assumed he would always occupy; the splendid inaccessibility of the place made any thought of his ever being supplanted seem an idle thought

indeed. Once when Rogers and Tennyson were walking and talking together the younger poet spoke of 'what is called Immortality,' and how few writers could be sure of it; and then the veteran man of letters squeezed his companion's arm and said, 'I am sure of it.'

Just how much he meant by that we shall never know. The old worldling may have qualified the seemingly childlike remark with a number of subtile shadings. His manner of uttering a simple thing often made it the reverse of simple. If he really believed that his verse was built of durable stuff he should have been congratulated upon his belief. It has not yet been proved that he was mistaken.

Rogers remained the author of *The Pleasures of Memory* until such time as the world found it more convenient to distinguish him as the author of 'Rogers's *Italy*'; for the two words invariably marched side by side, and thus do they march to the present day, especially in the catalogues of the dealers in rare books. The work was first published without illustrations, had but a slow sale, was withdrawn from the trade and the remainder burned. Then the author set about the making of that sumptuous edition which became, at the time of its appearance, the talk of the town,

and which is still the heart's desire of innumerable collectors. There were ten thousand copies printed, — a fortunate circumstance for the amateurs, many of whom may hope to be supplied.

The undertaking cost Rogers thirty-five thousand dollars, and he seems to have got his money back. He may even have made a few hundred dollars, which was not his object in publishing the book. The vignettes, fifty-six in number, were the principal expense. Twenty-five of them were made from drawings by Turner, twenty from drawings by Stothard. Luttrell said that Rogers's *Italy* would have been dished had it not been for the plates, a *mot* that the world liked to repeat, usually in the rhymed version attributed to Lady Blessington. Yet a modern critic of repute holds that the *Italy* is the only one of Rogers's poems which can still be read; in this way, however, and his distinction is a curious one; we can read it, he says, 'almost as if it were prose, but with no dis-'taste at its being in verse.'

He was a wonderfully interesting man, this Giver of Breakfasts, and the great world in which he figured did itself no little honor by its entire appreciation of his remarkable powers. Social intercourse became more than ever a fine art under his touch. He was both shrewd and cautious. He

aimed at nothing that he could not do, and he did perfectly whatever he undertook. There was no house in London, among the many to which men and women resorted for conversation, which had so long, so varied, and so rich a history as the house in St. James's Place. One may say this, keeping in mind the fact that Rogers and his home were identical; it is not a question of a great historic mansion, tenanted by the scion of an old and influential family. The force which drew the world to this particular spot was the winning personality of the bald, wrinkled, little old man who dwelt there.

That he was most attractive both in manner and speech cannot be doubted. His little sarcasms gave piquancy to his talk, and the listeners enjoyed them. Not every one was so sensitive for his fellow-man as Washington Irving. Some injustice has been done Rogers by repeating his caustic sayings without the context, or by taking for a deliberate and final judgment what was meant to be taken in a wholly different way. When some one remarked that Byron's verse was full of fire, and Rogers replied, 'Yes, hell fire!' it was quite enough to laugh at the host's wit, it was not worth while to record the harmless jest as an illustration of his habitual acerbity. Not that

this particular saying was so recorded, but very many quite as harmless have been.

Having a reputation for bitterness Rogers was expected to live up to it, which he sometimes failed to do. The occasions when he did not serve up his absent friends with a squeeze of lemon over each were quite as numerous as those on which he did. Locker-Lampson, then very young, was taken by his father to breakfast with Rogers. He remembered the poet as 'calm and kind: neither 'then nor afterwards did I detect any of that quiet 'venom for which his particular friends were 'pleased to give him so much credit.' The boy's recollection may have been at fault, but not the man's; 'neither then nor afterwards,' he says. And that is a neat touch, his putting on Rogers's intimates a part of the responsibility for the bad name Rogers bore.

Scott, describing a breakfast at St. James's Place, says that 'Sam made us merry' with his criticisms of Stewart Rose's *Ariosto*, and proposed that the Italian should be printed on the opposite page 'for the sake of assisting the indolent reader to 'understand the English. . . . Well, well, Rose 'carries a dirk too.' Perhaps Rogers's friends drove *him* to carry a dirk.

A REGENCY SATIRIST

(THOMAS MOORE)

CERTAIN Professor of Literature remarks that 'it would be 'interesting, though perhaps a 'little impertinent, to put to any 'given number of well-informed 'persons under the age of forty 'or fifty the sudden query, who was Thomas Brown 'the Younger?'

The question is not impertinent when put to booksellers, whose business it is to know about authors and their works. If put often enough it may result in bringing to light a copy of Thomas Brown's *Intercepted Letters, or the Twopenny Post-Bag*, 'With Explanatory Notes by an American 'Gentleman,' one of an edition printed at Baltimore in 1813. Besides the notes there is an 'Advertisement' or preface in which the American publisher attributes the lively little work to 'the 'pens of the Authors of *Horace in London* and '*Rejected Addresses*, two brothers, who have been 'pleasantly and appropriately named the Castor and 'Pollux, of humorous poetry, and whose elegant

'but unlabored effusions have for some time past 'amused the gay *fashionables* of London.'

That *The Twopenny Post-Bag*, as it is commonly called, was ever laid to the credit of James and Horace Smith will come as a surprise to most of us. The Baltimore publisher may have been told so by his 'literary friend, recently from England,' who made the notes for this very edition. Doubtless many readers, both in the metropolis and the provinces, thought that none but the authors of *Rejected Addresses* could have produced so sparkling a book as *The Twopenny Post-Bag*.

Byron knew who wrote the little volume of satires. So did Rogers, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Holland, and a host of Whig politicians and men of letters besides. There seems to have been no attempt to hide the identity of the author. It was as well known then as now that Thomas Brown the Younger was Thomas Moore, sometimes called Thomas Little, and very often spoken of as Anacreon. Why Moore was put to no personal inconvenience because of the audacities of Brown is a question that would seem to require an answer. Leigh Hunt went to jail (he took his piano with him, by the by) for uttering a few breezy remarks about his Prince. Moore said anything he liked and went at large.

THOMAS MOORE

'It was as well known then as now that Thomas Brown
'the Younger was Thomas Moore, sometimes called
'Thomas Little, and very often spoken of as Anacreon.
'Why Moore was put to no inconvenience because of
'the audacities of Brown is a question that would seem
'to require an answer.'

The number and influence of the little Irish poet's friends may account for the immunity he enjoyed, if the fact really needs to be accounted for. He was a popular man, and deservedly so. And it may be that the adroit manner of the attack nonplussed the Court faction. Mr. MacLaurel, in *Headlong Hall*, explained in part how the thing might be done: —

'Ye point an attack against them [the menestry] 'within the pale o' the law; an' if they tak nae 'heed o' ye, ye open a stronger fire; an' the less 'heed they tak, the mair ye bawl, an' the mair 'factious ye grow, always within the pale o' the 'law; till they send a plenipotentiary to treat wi' 'ye for yoursel, and then the mair popular ye hap-'pen to be, the better price ye fetch.'

Moore's satirical gifts were not for sale, and 'the 'menestry' were not so childish as to assume that they might be. We may conclude then that the lampooner pointed his attack always within the pale of the law. Exactly how that was done in 1812–13 is what we should like to know. It would hardly seem true that a satirist's defences could be made impregnable by the easy trick of substituting dashes for vowels. The law must have been simple-minded indeed if it contented itself with such thin disguises as R-g-nt for Regent and

P——e for Prince, with C-stl-r-gh for Castlereagh, Eld-n for Eldon, and H-rtf-rd for Hertford.

The wit and sparkle of the lines, the dexterous rhymes, and the high spirits with which the work is informed make *The Twopenny Post-Bag* the best of reading now a hundred years after it was written. It is astonishingly modern, resembling in that particular Byron's Letters. The *Melodies*, on which Moore's fame is believed chiefly to rest, are a good deal faded. Not so the satires, which seem as brilliant as when they were first written.

All of the eight letters which compose *The Post-Bag* contain echoes of the angry contest that was going on over the question of removing Catholic disabilities, and three in particular, the first, the fourth, and the sixth. The first purports to be a gleeful note from the Princess Charlotte to her Catholic friend, Lady Barbara Ashley. The Princess has accepted a pair of ponies from Lady Barbara, and there is a great hubbub in consequence. Eldon goes to the Regent and a cabinet council is summoned to discuss the probable outcome of so grave an event. Says the Princess —

> **The Archbishops declare, frighten'd out of their wits,**
> **That if vile Popish Ponies should eat at my manger,**
> **From that awful moment the Church is in danger;**
> **Ay, give them but stabling, and shortly no stalls**
> **Will suit their proud stomachs but those at St. Paul's.**

The fourth letter is the wail of a certain Doctor Patrick Duigenan, of Dublin, whose violent attacks on the Roman Church were hurting the cause he espoused, and who has been for the moment silenced by the Ministry. 'Doctor Pat's' grief overflows in this letter to his friend, the Right Honorable John Nicholl. No one is left now to cry 'Whore of Babylon' unless Nicholl will do it. The sixth letter is addressed by a visiting Persian, Abdallah, to a friend in Ispahan. He finds the English a thinking people because in the matter of religious toleration their views are 'so Per-'sian and so right.' In truth, says Abdallah, they won't tolerate toleration, and treat the Catholics just as we, 'the Established sect,' treat the 'rascal Sunnites.'

The thrusts at the Prince begin with the second letter, in which Colonel MacMahon, the Regent's personal representative, congratulates G. F. Leckie, Esq., on his new and learned book, a work so grateful to Royalty that the Prince has actually read it: —

> **(The only book, himself remarks,**
> **Which he has read since Mrs. Clarke's.)**
> **Last Levee-morn he look'd it through,**
> **During that awful hour or two**
> **Of grave tonsorial preparation,**
> **Which, to a fond admiring nation,**
> **Sends forth announc'd by trump and drum,**
> **The best-wigg'd Prince in Christendom.**

The book in question argued for a 'simple mon-'archy,' more authority to the Crown, and less power of interference on the part of Parliament. The Prince is represented as overjoyed at the prospect of an improved state of affairs. As Colonel MacMahon puts it: —

> **But now, he trusts, we're coming near a**
> **Better and more royal era;**
> **When England's monarch need but say,**
> **"Whip me those scoundrels, Castlereagh!"**
> **Or, "hang me up those Papists, Eldon,"**
> **And 't will be done — aye, faith, and well done.**

The rhymed postscript to this letter contains a daring allusion to the Marchioness of Hertford, whose power over her royal admirer was a matter of town talk. The American editor's note on the lady has a flavor all its own: 'She has reached what 'is called in most countries a "sober, staid, age." 'But they order these things better in England.'

The dinner described in the third letter was given and eaten in honor of the Regent's triumph over Leigh Hunt. Who were there, what they had to eat and drink, the way they behaved, and the ribald toasts that were offered — are all set down in a note supposed to have been written by George himself to his boon companion Lord Yarmouth, familiarly known as 'Bloater.' It is a savage little thing, yet redeemed in a way by the literary skill

with which it is handled. But the oftener one reads it the more does one marvel that Thomas Brown dared to print the piece. Yet another slap at the Prince will be found in the fifth letter, an exceedingly brilliant piece of work, setting forth the difficulties of a Dowager Countess in getting people to come to her parties. Without some novelty or other to draw them a jaded fashionable world simply will not stir. And the Countess begs her friend to tell her what new monster has come to town that she may, peradventure, lay hands on: —

> **Is there no Algerine, no Kamchatkan arriv'd?**
> **No Plenipo Pacha, three tail'd and ten wiv'd?**
> **No Russian, whose dissonant consonant name**
> **Almost rattles to fragments the trumpet of Fame?**

She might indeed have the Regent, but 'that show 'has gone by.' And furthermore, he and the 'Mar-'chesa' have taken lately to whispering in doorways, —

> **Which — considering, you know, dear, the *size* of the two —**
> **Makes a block that one's company *cannot* get through.**

A post-bag of intercepted letters would naturally contain missives of all sorts, and the reader is not surprised to find one from a publishing firm to an author anent the return of a manuscript. How the postal revenues would fall off were letters of this nature to find some other mode of conveyance! And again, how authors would rejoice in

the return of a manuscript could it be accompanied by a letter like the one Thomas Brown represents Messrs. Lackington and Co. as writing!

Though unable to make use of the work submitted to them the house is good enough to offer suggestions. The author might try a 'Quarto of 'Travels,' an East India pamphlet, or 'a lick at the 'Papists,' which is sure to sell well. He might write Parodies and thereby secure an invitation to certain Blue-Stocking routs, or he might review. But their happiest proposal is the following. Mr. Scott (author of *The Lady of the Lake*, *Marmion*, and other popular works), —

> **Having quitted the Borders to seek new renown,**
> **Is coming, by long Quarto stages, to Town;**
> **And beginning with Rokeby (the job 's sure to pay)**
> **Means to *do* all the Gentlemen's seats on the way.**
> **Now the Scheme is (though none of our hackneys can beat him)**
> **To start a fresh poet through Highgate to meet him;**
> **Who by means of quick proofs — no revises — long coaches —**
> **May do a few Villas before Scott approaches —**
> **Indeed, if our Pegasus be not curst shabby,**
> **He 'll reach, without found'ring, at least Woburn Abbey.**

All this is in the purest spirit of fun, and Scott himself must have had a hearty laugh over it. Yet Lockhart lays a measure of the failure of *Rokeby*, 'among the London circles at least,' to the 'sar-'castic flings' in the *Twopenny Post-Bag*.

The last of the eight letters — addressed by Colonel Thomas, the Regent's Vice-Chamberlain,

to a dandy of the first water (Lumley Skeffington, perhaps) bidding him to a fête at Carlton House — gives a lively picture of the fashionable world of that time. The satire is chiefly directed against the Prince. Moore would not spare the man whose patronage thirteen years earlier had lifted him to the seventh heaven. And he may have been quite in the right. Politics has never been a contest in the amenities. And the game was played in the bitterest spirit during the Regency.

The correspondence which makes up the *Post-Bag* proper fills about one half of the little volume. The other half consists of nineteen miscellaneous poems and squibs, described by their author as 'Trifles,' not the most accurate of words, I think. Certainly the 'Parody of a Celebrated Letter' (the Regent to his brother Frederick, Duke of York) is no trifle; a sheaf of barbed arrows were a better characterization. No less stinging are 'The Insurrection of the Papers,' the two paraphrases of Horace, the 'Occasional Address for the Opening of the New Theatre of St. Stephens,' and the 'Sale of the Tools,' *videlicet*, a set of worn-out Ministers. One can guess with what joy the Opposition read these clever lampoons.

Nearly all of the *Post-Bag* verses had appeared first in the newspapers. Moore had little hope of

success for them in book form, and wrote despondingly to his friend Power (March 23, 1813). To his delight the little volume ran through five editions at once, and the money he got from it came just in time to pay for the repairs on Mayfield Cottage, his new home in Derbyshire. It was from a sense that the *Post-Bag* had been too hurriedly written that Moore's questionings arose: 'It is impossible to make 'things *good* in the very little time I took about 'that. . . .'

To us the book seems to have been done with amazing certainty of touch. Few works of the kind give us a keener relish for the study of contemporaneous social and political history. It is one of those literary documents which, though of slight texture and seemingly ephemeral interest, have the power vividly to call up bygone days. Past politics become present politics when we read *The Twopenny Post-Bag*. And what a book to annotate — if a man had the knowledge and the annotating faculty! He could revel in fine-print comments more copious than those Mathias wrote for his so-called *Pleasures of Literature*, and infinitely more racy.

Thomas Brown's next satire, *The Fudge Family in Paris* (1818), is a more elaborate performance

than its predecessor, longer by many lines, better constructed, quite as gay in the mirthful passages and no less serious of purpose where seriousness is intended. No effort is made to conceal the authorship of the work, there is an avowal of it rather. Thomas Brown the Younger affects indignation because 'the fame of the Twopenny Post-'Bag—such as it is—having hovered doubtfully 'over several persons, has at last settled upon the 'head of a certain little gentleman, who wears it, 'I understand, as complacently as if it actually 'belonged to him. . . .' Then follows a pun (in Greek) on the name of Moore, lest there should be any doubt as to who is meant by 'a certain little 'gentleman.'

In form the satire is a group of twelve letters narrating the visit to Paris of Mr. Phil. Fudge, his son Bob, his daughter Biddy, together with the family tutor, a distant relation, Phelim Connor by name. Biddy writes to her friend Miss Dorothy —— of Clonskilty, in Ireland; Bob writes to a school-mate, presumably an aspirant dandy like himself; Phelim Connor's letters are addressed to an unknown correspondent, and their tone is that of a gloomy, suffering patriot who wants it understood how much he suffers; Phil. Fudge pens his epistles to his political master, Vis-

count Castlereagh, and to his brother, Tim. Fudge, Esq., barrister at law.

Bob and Biddy are on pleasure bent. They have come to Paris to drink deep of the delights Paris has to offer. The youth has opinions on the subject of Continental politics, but dressing, dining, and ogling the girls are his chief study. In the final settlement of European affairs the jocular Bob does n't care a whit what becomes of the French people; but if the extermination of the absurd and ungrateful race be determined on he hopes measures will be taken to spare the cooks: —

> **Though many, I own, are the evils they 've brought us,**
> **Though Royalty 's here on her very last legs;**
> **Yet, who can help loving the land that has taught us**
> **Six hundred and eighty-five ways to dress eggs?**

The truth is that Bob's gastronomic adventures quite unsettle the reader who has a weakness that way. On the whole he is a likeable fellow, Bob Fudge, if only for the heart-felt and honest manner in which he avows his mundane tastes.

Biddy, as a matter of course, is all for French millinery and modish frocks, for the opera, the theatre, and the Promenades Aériennes, that is to say, the roller-coaster of the year 1818. She has one flirtation which turns out badly — the gentleman was not the King of Prussia, disguised as Count Ruppin, as the girl fondly believed; merely

a simple linen-draper. Otherwise there is no cloud in Biddy's sky. She writes Dorothy that it is a mistake to say the French are not a religious people, for at the play-house of St. Martin they are giving the Testament nightly in the form of 'melodrame': —

> **And, doubtless, so fond they 're of scriptural facts,**
> **They will soon get the Pentateuch up in five acts.**
> **Here Daniel, in pantomime, bids bold defiance**
> **To Nebuchadnezzar and all his stuff'd lions,**
> **While pretty young Israelites dance round the Prophet,**
> **In very thin clothing, and *but* little of it.**

Miss Biddy also saw the famous Bégrand as Susanna, in the Biblical play of that name — saw her coming out of the bath

> **In a manner that, Bob says, is quite *Eve-angelic!***

Phil. Fudge's first letter is addressed to Viscount Castlereagh, and shows Moore's mocking and ironical powers at their best. The writer extols not alone the politician's skill in statecraft but also his fine rhetorical gifts. Castlereagh had, so it would seem, real genius for the contrivance of mixed figures. Moore credits the orators of his native land with an aptitude for this sort of thing, and he versifies Castlereagh's 'And now, Sir, I 'must embark into the feature on which this 'question chiefly hinges.' From this same letter we learn in part what Mr. Fudge's object is in

coming to France; he is to write a work that will show the unrivalled happiness of Continental peoples under the new political arrangement. His book

> *Will* prove that all the world, at present,
> Is in a state extremely pleasant:
> That Europe — thanks to royal swords
> And bay'nets, and the Duke commanding —
> Enjoys a peace which, like the Lord's,
> Passeth all human understanding:
> . . . . . .
> That Poland, left for Russia's lunch
> Upon the side-board snug reposes;
> While Saxony 's as pleas'd as Punch,
> And Norway "on a bed of roses!"
> That, as for some few million souls,
> Transferr'd by contract, bless the clods!
> If half were strangled — Spaniards, Poles,
> And Frenchmen — 't would n't make much odds,
> So Europe's goodly Royal ones
> Sit easy on their sacred thrones.

This will not be the first time that Phil. Fudge has put pen to paper in the way of book-making. A work entitled 'Down with Kings, or, Who'd 'have Thought It' is attributed to him. It has long since been forgotten, however. Mr. Fudge discusses the point in a letter to his brother Tim., the barrister. We learn incidentally that Phil. is not only a political turncoat or 'rat,' but that he is an informer or spy. More useful than the common turncoat he is a rat who lets the cat out of the bag. Later on Mr. Fudge defends his occupation with precedents drawn from Roman history, and

institutes his famous comparison between Lord Sidmouth and Tiberius: —

> **What! *he*, the Peer, that injures no man,**
> **Like that severe, blood-thirsty Roman! —**
> **'Tis true the Tyrant lent an ear to**
> **All sorts of spies — so doth the Peer, too.**
> **'Tis true, my Lord's Elect tell fibs,**
> **And deal in perj'ry — *ditto* Tib's.**
> **'Tis true, the Tyrant screen'd and hid**
> **His rogues from justice — *ditto* Sid.**
> **'T is true the Peer is grave and glib**
> **At moral speeches — *ditto* Tib.**
> **'T is true the feats the Tyrant did**
> **Were in his dotage — *ditto* Sid.**

No less witty is the extract from Fudge's journal to Castlereagh, apropos of a waking dream that the writer had. Fudge had seen at the madhouse in Paris a man whose delusion was that he had been guillotined; and when under Bonaparte's strong rule the heads were restored, as nearly as possible, to their rightful owners, he (the patient) was so unfortunate as to get another man's head. And so the excellent Fudge, with this thought dancing in his brain, tries on various heads between sleeping and waking, and among them Lord Castlereagh's. Then he falls asleep and dreams that he is — Bottom.

For quotable lines, clever and unexpected turns, ingenious parallels, amusing episodes and descriptions there are few pieces that can match *The Fudge Family in Paris*. It is mischievous to be

sure, and was meant to be; but its mischievousness is gay, light, sparkling, never saturnine. One fault it has, in common with its forerunner — it is a plain-spoken book. Both satires contain allusions and phrases of a sort no longer used; we are grown more reticent, whether we have grown cleaner-minded is another question. Moore's frankness of speech is usually explained on the ground of its being the custom of the time to use such words. A like frankness on Byron's part is not always as charitably judged. One can remember having heard it laid to the influence of the devil that was in the man.

The two satires we have glanced at give the reader an adequate notion of Moore's powers, and make it perfectly clear why he stands in the front rank of English satirists. Any one who is reading from a mere sense of duty may now close the book. He has done all that is required of him. The man who is reading for pleasure will not be too hasty in returning the volume to its place on the shelves. He will want to spend a little time over *The Fables for the Holy Alliance*, and some of the later poems touching on current political topics. What a clever little squib is the one entitled 'Corn and Catholics!' And there are a half hundred more quite as well worth the reading.

As Americans we have, quite naturally, our own reasons for being interested in the volume of 1806, *Epistles, Odes, and Other Poems*. It was indeed a hot little versifier who composed the rhymed letters addressed to Viscount Forbes and to Thomas Hume. Moore wrote from Washington. He was not pleased with this land of 'bears 'and yankees, democrats and frogs.' His strictures were all well enough, but there was little wit in the putting of them. As a result he made the Americans angry and did them very little good. They were not even placated by the manly preface in which he explained why he disliked them. There are Americans of the present time so unhumorous as still to resent Moore's attacks. Happily their number is few. The only thing we have to regret, in this matter of the satires on the United States, is that there were not more of them, and that they were not done with the brilliancy and point that distinguish *The Twopenny Post-Bag* and *The Fudge Family in Paris*. Our debt to Thomas Moore would then be greater than we could ever hope to discharge.

THOMAS HOPE AND HIS 'ANASTASIUS'

I

HE biographical writers have not done well by Thomas Hope. To be exact they have done nothing at all, and one must go to the encyclopædias for facts about the author of *Anastasius*.

Usually there is pretty good gleaning in the encyclopædias, but a reader who has the weakness to be much interested in a given man of letters often feels that his hero of the moment has been dealt with rather curtly. The new *Britannica* gives fifty-nine lines to Thomas Hope, and sixty-one lines to Hopedale, Massachusetts. The present writer would have distributed the space somewhat differently, being more interested in the novelist than in Adin Ballou and his industrial town. But editors are good judges of 'what the public 'wants.'

The *Topographical History of Surrey* contains a sketch of the celebrated virtuoso (written in the polite style), from which we learn that he 'was 'not only a distinguished patron of literature and

THOMAS HOPE

Of Hope himself Irving says, 'He is an extremely 'interesting man, somewhat shy and reserved to 'strangers, but full of knowledge and talent, and most 'amiable in his manners when you become acquainted 'with him.'

'the fine arts, but also a cultivator of the same 'in his own person.' The fullest account is, as a matter of course, that given in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the nature of the work admitting an expansiveness denied the general book of reference.

The Hopes of Amsterdam were North British by descent, and Batavian by long residence. They appear to have had unlimited sums of money at their command. Thomas Twining, during his tour of America, met one of the Barings who had come over here 'on account of the Messrs. Hope's 'house, of Amsterdam,' to buy up a large part of the Province of Maine. John Hope, father of the novelist, is said to have spent a quarter of a million dollars on his country-seat near Haarlem. The novelist had a brother 'a man of simple 'tastes,' who amused himself by collecting diamonds and paintings of the Flemish school. We are not told what the value of the paintings was, but the diamonds this man of simple tastes got together were worth three quarters of a million of our money.

Thomas Hope inherited his passion for pictures, marbles, vases, and other delectable objects from his father, the merchant-prince, who had suffered grievously from the same complaint. He spent

eight years in the study of architecture, visiting for the purpose Spain, Italy, Sicily, Greece, Turkey, Syria, and Egypt. All that time he was consciously or unconsciously gathering the material for his great romance.

When the Netherlands fell into the hands of the French he removed to England, as did other members of the family of Hope. He bought a town house in Duchess Street, Portland Place, the beautiful estate of Deepdene, at Dorking in Surrey, and for the rest of his life gave himself up to his hobbies. And very pleasant hobbies they were — the collecting of works of art and the writing of books. In 1807 he brought out his *Household Furniture and Internal Decorations*, in 1809 *The Costume of the Ancients*, in 1812 *Designs of Modern Costumes*. Like certain inns mentioned by Baedeker, all three books have been 'variously 'spoken of.'

At the town house Thomas Hope first put his ideas of decoration into concrete form. The building was plain enough without, but so glorious within as to be included among the thirteen 'Pal-'aces and Private Mansions' described in Pugin's *Public Buildings of London*. An account of the Flemish Gallery only is given in this work; one must go to more discursive writers to learn about

the Egyptian room, the Indian room, the Star room, and other wonders of the celebrated house.

Having large wealth Hope could not only buy what he pleased (twenty thousand dollars worth of vases from Sir William Hamilton's collection, for example), but could also patronize whom he would. His purchase of the 'Jason' by young Thorwaldsen was a turning-point in the sculptor's career. Chantrey, Flaxman, and Canova all profited by his appreciation. A French artist named Dubost was less happy in his relations with the rich collector. They had a dispute over the price of a painting. By way of revenge Dubost made and publicly exhibited a caricature of Thomas Hope and his wife under the title of 'Beauty and 'the Beast.' Mrs. Hope's brother, Mr. Beresford, mutilated the work in the exhibition-room. Dubost brought a suit for damages and was awarded five pounds. It was not much, though a more generous consolation than was afforded Whistler in his suit for libel against Ruskin.

There are brief notices of Hope in the correspondence of Washington Irving. 'Geoffrey 'Crayon' spent several days at 'The Deep Dene' (as the name of the Surrey place used to be written), in the month of June, 1822. He describes his hostess as 'one of the loveliest women in the

'kingdom, and one of the reigning deities of 'fashion.' Of Hope himself Irving says, 'He is an 'extremely interesting man, somewhat shy and re- 'served to strangers, but full of knowledge and 'talent, and most amiable in his manners when 'you become acquainted with him.'

The American guest attempts no description of the great house, professing an inability to give his correspondent an idea of the taste and magnificence with which it was furnished. But he who wrote so charmingly of Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey could have penned something worth while about Deepdene had he been so minded. It would be pleasant to have his account of the 'amphi- 'theatre' mentioned by Evelyn, the beauties of which threw the honest Aubrey into raptures.

One thinks of Deepdene always in connection with *Anastasius* and its author. The place has other literary associations. It was a rallying-point twenty years later for the 'Young England' party. Disraeli began the writing of *Coningsby*, the first novel of his political trilogy, at Deepdene. The book was dedicated to Henry Hope, the then proprietor (eldest son of Thomas Hope), who, says Disraeli, 'first urged the expediency of my treating in a 'literary form those views and subjects which were 'the matter of our frequent conversation.'

At the time Washington Irving paid his visit the reviewers and the reading-public had accepted Thomas Hope as the real author of *Anastasius*. They were loath to do so at first. That a man who wrote of tables and chairs should also have the power to write a brilliant romance seemed incredible and preposterous. The critics were quite thrown off their balance. 'Blackwood' reviewed the book in its customary style: Hope was an 'upholsterer' and had neither the courage nor the power to compile such a work as *Anastasius;* Byron was undoubtedly the author, the historical parts might be 'tributary contributions of Hobhouse.' The reviewer gives proofs. They are such as might appeal to a school-boy, or to a Baconian in his more trusting moments.

In the next number of the magazine Hope claimed the book as his own. He had finished his novel 'as to the matter, long before Lord Byron's 'admirable productions appeared; and need scarcely 'add, though I do so explicitly, that I am the sole 'author of Anastasius. . . .' The letter is well written and when read in connection with the article that called it out emphasizes the contrast between an English gentleman and a 'Blackwood' reviewer — or better, perhaps, this 'Blackwood' reviewer.

Some of Hope's brother authors rather begrudged

him his literary luck. Not Byron, however, though the poet told Lady Blessington that he 'had wept 'bitterly over many pages of it, and for two reasons '—first, that he had not written it; and, secondly, 'that Hope had.' It is doubtful whether Byron wept as often as he said he did. No mention is made of tears in his letter to John Murray, merely a matter-of-fact 'I thought *Anastasius* excellent: 'did I not say so?'

II

Anastasius: or Memoirs of a Greek;[1] *written at the close of the Eighteenth Century* was published anonymously in three octavo volumes, by John Murray, Albemarle Street, London; the title-page bears the date 1819. From the wording of the preface one would take the book to be a translation. The original manuscript is described as 'ill-written and 'full of erasures,' and the editor speaks of the difficulty he found in the spelling of proper names; 'it was extremely difficult to alter the original 'orthography to that which in English would pro-'duce the same sounds.' The hero is admitted to be no model. For all that the book will have a value as 'a picture of national manners and cus-

[1] Not 'Modern Greek,' as the *Britannica*, *Chambers*, and other books of reference have it.

'toms.' The present age is peculiarly interested in the regions 'once adorned by the Greeks, and now 'defaced by the Turks. . . .'

The novel is a specimen of the class known as *picaresque*. The narrative is written in the first person. Anastasius tells his own story (as Jack Wilton does), and tells it at too great length. The first volume contains three hundred and fifty-five pages, as much as an ordinary novel; the second is still longer, and the third longer than the second.

Born in the island of Chio, the son of a Drogueman[1] and the youngest of seven children, Anastasius was the darling of his parents. These good people were very religious, sticklers for punctuality in every sort of devout practice, mass-going, confession, and fasts, but of morality they had the vaguest ideas. An act was wrong if it put one in peril of the bastinado at the hands of the Turks.

Destined to the priesthood young Anastasius trained himself for the business of tithing by plundering the orchards of the peasants, but he had no liking for books and no taste for study. Doing nothing was more to his mind — that and teaching the blue-eyed daughter of the French consul to play on the lyre. The result of their intimacy

[1] Hope's invariable spelling of the word. The forms he employed caused some of the reviewers deep sorrow. See his note, vol. 1, p. 368.

was what one might expect in a romance. The boy fled from Chio and the wrath of Helena's father.

He embarked on a Venetian brig which was presently boarded by a boatful of Maynote pirates, who in turn, together with their captives, were seized by the Turks and carried off to the plains of Argos where Hassan's army was encamped. What one of an indefinite number of Hassans this was, and what he was doing in Argos, are left in no uncertainty. For at this point the reader comes on the first of the historical chapters with which the work is studded. He is inclined somewhat to resent its presence, and to affirm his entire lack of interest in the details of a petty squabble between the Sultan and one of his outlying provinces. But he becomes reconciled as he reads, is aware that he has learned a good deal on every page, and trusts that the author will not trouble to teach him anything more at present; for his part he would rather hear about Anastasius, that lively little rascal, whose story promises to become entertaining.

Mavroyeni, Hassan's Drogueman, takes a fancy to the handsome, quick-witted stripling and bestows on him the high honor of carrying his pipe and coffee-cup. Anastasius follows his patron to

Constantinople and makes himself useful in various ways, for example, ridding Mavroyeni of the horde of poor relations that beset his door. Through over strict attention to sundry enterprises of his own he loses his place, and, not knowing what better to do, becomes assistant to a quack-doctor, a Jew, who threads the narrow streets with a medicine-chest containing pills of starch and powders of pipe-clay. The method followed by the pair was to pay but one visit to a patient, pocket the fee, and avoid the neighborhood from that time on.

Caught at their work by a regular practitioner they are denounced to the 'president of the kill-'ing college' and sent to the Bagnio or prison. Released in course of time Anastasius, following in father's footsteps, turns interpreter, and attaches himself first to a party of German tourists, then to an English button-maker from Birmingham, and finally to a French chevalier whose ambition was to have an *affaire de cœur* with the favorite Sultana, and who proposed, on his return to his own country, to write an account of Turkey rather as it ought to be than as it was. Out of these various relations come a number of entertaining episodes.

Well inured by this time to the life of the capital, Anastasius becomes a professed gallant and has

'gay' adventures. Chased from a gynæceum where he had no right to be and pursued by a street-mob, he takes refuge in a mosque and, with his back to the mihrab, cries, 'I am a Moslemin!' He has saved himself from a mauling, but at the cost of being compelled to master the intricacies of his new faith. A venerable Moollah agrees to fit him for his new character, a simple process involving only four years' study at the rate of two hours a day. Anastasius is so overcome by the thought that he falls asleep while the reverend old gentleman is talking. Luckily he meets another Moollah who tells him of a short cut in religious learning by which he will save a deal of time and trouble: 'Whenever you meet with an infidel, abuse him 'with all your might, no one will doubt you are 'yourself a staunch believer.' Anastasius promises to take this sensible advice. The first victim of his zeal is a fellow-Greek to whom he had sworn eternal friendship. Remorse drives him to become a soldier of fortune.

The second volume (not to give too much space to the first) begins with an account of the young man's adventures in Egypt, where he becomes a favorite of Suleiman Bey, is put in authority over a district, and has the honor of being wedded to Khadidgé, the Bey's daughter, an interesting

young lady who concealed within a most delicate frame a most unbending mind. 'The least breath 'of air seemed capable of annihilating her person, 'but no breath of man had any power to influence 'her will.' Fortunately for Anastasius, Khadidgé's hold on life was less tenacious than her hold on her opinions.

Having lost his petty government, together with his wife, our gentleman makes a pilgrimage to Mekkah, and then joins a caravan bound for Medinah and Damascus. Among his fellow-travellers was a Greek, a Cypriote, who had embraced the Faith for the sole purpose of 'being qualified to 'return to another Mohammedan, without breach 'of etiquette, the favour of a drubbing. No sooner 'was he admitted to the bosom of Islamism, than 'he ran to discharge the debt; and paid it with 'such ample interest that his creditor was never 'heard to utter a single syllable of complaint.' The zealous convert was now doing penance for this act of petulance.

Anastasius visits Chio, his native island, to the great annoyance of his brothers, who were sincerely hoping they had seen the last of a rascal who differed from themselves only in point of boldness and enterprise. They do him the honor to try to murder him, thereby raising themselves

mightily in his respect. After further wanderings in search of glory and gold, he makes his way to Vallachia, of which province Mavroyeni, his old patron, had become Hospodar. At this point the author yields, for the third or fourth time, to the temptation to be historical, and writes a series of episodes of the war between Turkey and Austria in 1788. Many of the descriptions are of extreme brilliancy. Here too will be found a specimen of the sort of humor in which Hope excelled — the capture by Austrian hussars of the gigantic camp-kettle belonging to a regiment of Jenissaries.

Mavroyeni is unsuccessful. He not only fails in his highest ambition, that of being celebrated in prose or verse, but he receives from the Kaliph the present of a bowstring, with an attendant to put it around his neck. Anastasius goes back to Constantinople and thence to Smyrna to embark in trade.

The last volume of the gigantic romance is in some ways the most interesting of the three, an uncommon occurrence. Few books as long drawn out as this hold the reader's attention to the eleven hundredth page. These final chapters contain the touching story of Euphrosyné, Anastasius's much-wronged mistress, the narrative of his strange journey to the land of the Wahhabees (with admirable

pictures of life in the desert), the account of his perils in the country of 'The Butcher,' and the story of the long search for his little son Alexis, whom he finds only to lose. Thomas Hope had among other literary gifts a great command of ironic humor, and not a few of his happiest strokes are reserved for this third volume. Lighter touches are not wanting, such as the account of the harem in the cabin of a passenger-ship bound for Scanderoon. 'Nothing so little seen except thunder 'ever made so much noise.' The rich merchant to whom the ladies belonged used to bring them to order by applying his pipe-stick to their backs. 'The whole of this good gentleman's life seemed 'to be divided between a puff and a blow.'

It is easy enough to understand why many well-read people have never looked into this book; but that anyone after reading it should express regret would be incomprehensible. The variety of its contents is amazing; everything that a work of the kind might legitimately contain is here.

III

A candidate for a University degree in letters, casting about for a subject on which to write his thesis, might make a worse choice than *Anastasius*. Its unhackneyed character and its obscurity are

points strongly in its favor. Writers of theses like dealing with out-of-the-way books.

Essays of this nature are always strong on the question of 'sources.' To find out what the sources of *Anastasius* were would make a very pretty study indeed. One would learn how Thomas Hope came by his materials, how much was due to direct observation, how much to hearsay, how much to invention. The pictures of manners would need to be verified and the historical passages subjected to critical analysis. We should be told in what degree the romance mirrors the Eighteenth century Greek mind. Is Anastasius himself a real Greek, or merely a clever Englishman's idea of one of the Islanders?

A question of much importance (which our thesis-writer would doubtless answer) is what place the book holds in the literature of the early nineteenth century. *Anastasius* is not a detached literary phenomenon, but rather one result of a general effort that was being made to celebrate the splendors and describe the life of the East. It is therefore related to the verse romances of Henry Gally Knight — *Ilderim*, *Phrosyne*, and *Alashtar*, — to Byron's *The Giaour*, and to Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. And lastly some explanation should be given why, since its author's death in 1831, the story has not become an accepted 'classic,' or at all events why

it is not reprinted, illustrated, and quoted; there must be some reason aside from its enormous length.

If our imaginary scholar will write and print his thesis I can promise him one reader, it were rash to promise him many. But then, he will have his degree, and that is something.

ECKFORD was what is commonly known as a 'character.' The convenient if vague term means anybody who is radically different from everybody else. A fondness for doing as one likes, with no reference to what one's neighbor likes, is the mark of a character. Such a man is pretty sure to be 'misunderstood.' Beckford was much misunderstood, but happily that made little difference to him. The new biographical study undertakes to clear up some of the misunderstandings. It is a Defence as well as a Life.

As the builder of Fonthill Abbey, and the author of the most brilliant Oriental romance in the English language, Beckford well deserves an adequate biography, and the wonder is that he has had to wait so long for it; he has been dead sixty-six years.

The welcome book is entitled *The Life and Letters of William Beckford of Fonthill* (*Author of "Vathek"*). It is the work of Lewis Melville, who seems to have gone about his task in an

admirable spirit, and to have done it in a no less admirable way. He was fortunate in having an unhackneyed theme, and the very attractive volume contains a mass of hitherto unpublished material, letters for the most part, together with certain portraits which have never before been given to the public.

This is not the first attempt at a detailed biography, though it is the first successful one. And while it supplants all that has gone before it has somehow the effect of making one go back to earlier writings on the same subject. And I am by no means sure that, for the 'confirmed reader,' there is not a deal of joy yet to be had in the pair of anonymous volumes published in London, in 1859, under the title of *Memoirs of William Beckford of Fonthill: Author of "Vathek."* The compiler was Cyrus Redding, whose *Fifty Years' Recollections* is advertised at the end of the second volume, along with a half-dozen forgotten novels by unknown novelists. On the last page of this same volume may be seen yet another advertisement, and of a sort calculated to make struggling authors stare in wonder.

It is a note from the publisher to the writing public. All who have manuscripts to sell — manuscripts that perchance are battered from much

travel to and fro — will read with deep interest these lines in which a London bookseller 'respectfully invites Naval and Military Officers, 'and Writers of Voyages, Travels, Memoirs, Etc., 'to favour him with an inspection of their Narratives intended for publication.' Fancy being 'respectfully' invited by a publisher 'to favour' him, in the manner aforesaid! The name of the astonishing person who extended an invitation in this miscellaneous off-hand way was Skeet — Charles J. Skeet, of King William Street, Charing Cross. It would be interesting to know his history, whether he lived long after exposing himself to the inevitable shower of heavy manuscripts that followed his appeal, where he was buried (assuming that his body could be recovered), how much money he left, and who was his heir.

Redding's book could not have made him rich, for it seems never to have attained the dignity of a second edition. Garnett describes it as 'an in-'tolerable piece of book-making.' The very badness of the thing renders it a source of delight. Though written only fifty years ago, it has a touch of the obsequious eighteenth-century manner. The author seems to go about in carpet-slippers, and to speak in hushed tones lest he disturb the great man whose memoirs he is compiling. The modern

attitude is almost too familiar. You are expected to be quite firm with your hero, even though you admire him. Extreme severity is sometimes termed giving a fresh estimate of his genius.

The author of the new life of Beckford is courteous towards his unsuccessful predecessor; he quotes him and does not abuse him. He is generous, too, in his attitude towards other writers on the same theme, as when he pronounces Garnett's sketch, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the 'best biographical account of Beck-'ford.'

The main facts of Beckford's life have long been well known. They are usually served up with a plentiful spicing of the legendary. He was born at Fonthill-Giffard, in Wiltshire, the only child (by a second wife) of 'that real patriot 'the Right Hon. William Beckford, twice Lord 'Mayor of London,' whose immense wealth was derived from West Indian estates. Chatham was his god-father. His tutor was chosen by the Bishop of St. Asaph at the instance of Lord Lyttleton. He was sent to neither public school nor university, but was thoroughly trained at home in all that an English gentleman might be expected to know. He finished his education at Geneva. His first book, *Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary*

Painters, a satire, an elaborate jest, was written between his eighteenth and nineteenth years, and published in 1780. *Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents; In a Series of Letters from Various Parts of Europe*, his second book, was published in 1783 and at once suppressed. He made what they used to call the Grand Tour just before coming of age, and a number of little tours afterward.

In May, 1783, he married Lady Margaret Gordon, daughter of the fourth Earl of Aboyne, whom he first met in the Assembly Rooms at Bath, a place where innumerable pairs of young people had their fate decided for them by Fate. Lady Margaret died at Vevey in 1786, leaving her husband two daughters the younger of whom, Susan Euphemia, became the Duchess of Hamilton. Beckford sought distraction in foreign travel. He spent much time in Portugal, and the manuals of English literature still speak of the 'palace' that he built at Cintra. It was a rented house and, according to Beckford, had been built by an English carpenter from Falmouth.

He was in Paris, hunting books and curios, when the Bastille fell, and it is believed that he may have witnessed the death of Louis the Sixteenth (January, 1793); he certainly had trouble in getting to England. Then it was that he or-

dered the building of the famous wall around his estates in Wiltshire; it was twelve feet high and nearly seven miles in extent, and was not constructed to hide the dark deeds of the proprietor. Many people believed so, however, for the legendary Beckford had already become a figure in the public mind. There was something exotic about the man; he carried the English taste for exclusiveness to the point where it became un-English; and besides this there were people who knew him as the author of *Vathek*, a book which told about caliphs, harems, eunuchs, and other horrid subjects.

The six and a half miles of wall were raised to keep out fox-hunters, who laughed at the idea of a man's thinking property was sacred when sport was in question. 'Your country gentlemen,' said Beckford, 'will transport a pauper for taking a 'few berries from a hedge, which they will break 'down without ceremony. They will take no de-'nial when they go hunting in their red jackets, 'to excruciate to death a poor hare. I found re-'monstrances vain, so I built the wall to exclude 'them. I never suffer an animal to be killed, but 'through necessity. Early in life I gave up shoot-'ing because I consider that we have no right to 'murder animals for sport.'

Many of Beckford's fellow-islanders have shared his views, but the position taken is one that could never be made intelligible to a genuine British sportsman. The country gentlemen whose estates lay adjacent to Fonthill had their opinion of their eccentric and independent neighbor.

Beckford would be remembered to the present day because of his building and his planting, because of his great wealth and his splendid collections, but he was indebted for his fame to a little duodecimo volume that runs to barely three hundred pages. He has been called 'one of the 'problems of English literature.' But why a 'prob-'lem'? Assuredly not because he wrote *Vathek*. The composition of that successful romance was a quite natural performance. There is no mystery about it save the mystery common to all books that defy the changes of fashion and insist on being read a century and more after they were written.

Consider Beckford's case. Here is an English boy who is being privately trained on old-fashioned lines, who reads Vergil, Horace, 'Tully's 'Offices and Orations,' the Greek Testament, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, who learns to declaim in English ('the speeches of our most distinguished 'parliamentary speakers were selected for the pur-

'pose'), and on Sundays writes out passages from the Bible. And this boy discovers a predilection for Oriental tales, and for the so-called *Arabian Nights* in particular. His passion is so marked that his tutor and his educational advisers think best to take the book away from him. Being a perfectly human boy he sulks a little under the discipline and thinks more of his book than ever. He greedily devours anything he can lay his hands on relating to Eastern life and manners. When he becomes to some extent master of his own time he plunges into the study of Arabic and Persian for the sheer love of such studies.

Finally, at the age of twenty-two or thereabouts, he writes an Oriental romance that has the luck to turn out a little masterpiece. It is thought to have been modelled to some extent on the tales of Count Anthony Hamilton, and some of the ideas have been traced to yet other sources; but its original and characteristic note is Beckford's own, and there never was a tale that came more naturally into existence.

While the author's genius was equal seemingly to the making of the one book, we cannot be sure that he had not creative energy stored up for the making of more than one. But he lacked the motive to write. Had he been a professional man of

letters (instead of being a rich and cultivated man of leisure), he would have followed up his triumph with a half-dozen Oriental tales. The critics and the public would have read them as a matter of course, and made the comments they always make, such as 'not equal to his first effort,' or 'surprisingly weak compared with *Vathek*,' or 'the author's eagerness to make capital out of his earlier success pains us who had looked for better things,' and so on.

Beckford told Cyrus Redding that he wrote *Vathek* when he was twenty-two. 'I wrote it at one sitting, and in French. It cost me three days and two nights of hard labour. I never took my clothes off the whole time. This severe application made me very ill.'

Knowing as we do exactly what Beckford said, it is a pity that we cannot know just what he meant. There is good reason for believing that he began the story in January, 1782, and finished it 'early in 1783.' He may have meant by his statement to Redding that the first complete draft of *Vathek* was written at one sitting; I do not recall having seen that explanation anywhere, but it is obvious enough to have been made many times before. Melville thinks that the protracted literary orgy of three days and two nights was held over

one of the 'episodes' of *Vathek*, and not over the principal work.

Beckford's chief adviser during the composition of *Vathek* was the Reverend Samuel Henley, then assistant-master at Harrow and afterwards Rector of Rendlesham in Suffolk. Henley undertook to make an English translation of the romance and to supply illustrative notes. One does not see what prevented Beckford from making his own translation. Perhaps he was too busy with literary and other projects. Perhaps it flattered him to be translated by a man of learning nearly twenty years older than himself.

He was less than pleased, however, when, in the summer of 1786, Henley published the translation with a preface and notes. The bookseller was J. Johnson, in St. Paul's Church-Yard, whose name also appears on the title-page of *Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents*. The anonymous volume is called simply *An Arabian Tale, From an Unpublished Manuscript*. The half-title reads *The History of the Caliph Vathek*.

Beckford, who was then in Switzerland, protested against the liberty his translator had taken, and at once arranged to bring out two editions in French, one printed at Lausanne, the other in Paris. Both bear the date 1787. The Paris edition

contains a few of Henley's notes, translated into French *by Beckford*. The Episodes, for the completion of which the author was holding back the principal narrative, have not yet been published, but are at this moment (April, 1910) announced as on the eve of making their appearance — one hundred and twenty-four years, approximately, from the date of their composition. Perhaps it was well for Beckford's fame that he had a Samuel Henley to force him into print.

We who read the novels of to-day for pleasure, and the romances of yesterday from a sense of duty, often meet with strange surprises. That the fame of *The Old English Baron*, *The Castle of Otranto*, and *Vathek* cannot be laid to a conspiracy of professors of literature, we know perfectly well. Nevertheless we assume that those queer tales only interest those whom they interest, and that we ourselves are not of that number. Hardy, Barrie, Meredith, Phillpotts, and Hewlett are for us, not Walpole, Beckford, and Miss Clara Reeve. The surprise comes when we find that any one of the old romances, by any one of a dozen authors who might be named, is indeed for us, sophisticated moderns though we be, and devotees of the romantic-realism of our time.

Besides this general apathy with respect to old

fiction many a man has a particular dislike to Eastern tales. He 'just naturally' hates afrits and houris, finds the *Arabian Nights* a good deal of a bore, even in Burton's translation, supplemented by Burton's anthropological notes, and shrinks from taking up any book that mentions a sultan or a seraglio. That recalcitrant reader is of all others the most amazed when he finds himself a victim to Beckford's magical power as displayed in *Vathek*. For the power is there, and can neither be denied nor resisted. One is safe, of course, from the fascination of any book so long as one refrains from opening it, and from the charms of many after they are opened. But he who once begins *Vathek* is bound, I think, to read it to the end.

The author did not throw much light on the vagaries of genius when he told Redding that the great hall of Old Fonthill House (his father's mansion) gave him the idea for the Hall of Eblis, and that the female characters in the story were portraits of the domestics, 'their imaginary good 'or ill qualities exaggerated to suit my purpose.' With a gift like his one could build and people cloud-capped towers without the aid of merely terrestrial suggestion. Where did he get his idea of the five palaces, of the tower, of the fantastic Indian, of the character of Nouronihar, of

Carrithis, and of the Caliph himself. It is easy to say that five senses require five palaces, that sensual passion, maternal love, and boundless pride made incarnate and exaggerated to the point of monstrosity will result in the production of just such extraordinary fancies. Beckford alone knew how *Vathek* came to be written, and he may have told all there is to tell when he said, 'I was soaring in 'my young fancy upon the Arabian bird roc, 'among genii and enchantments, not moving 'among men.'

In the account of the domain of Eblis, its monarch, the pre-Adamite kings, Soliman on his throne, and the myriads of wretched wanderers, he has reached, perhaps, the limits of art in the creation of the monstrous. A condemned man who was allowed a choice of hells would take this dark monarchy only because there was no room for him elsewhere.

If there was a notable wagging of Wiltshire tongues over the building of the great park wall, how must they not have wagged when the building of the Abbey began! Among the new points brought out by Lewis Melville is one explaining the origin of the famous structure. It was intended at first to be no more than a splendid stage-setting, a picturesque representation of a monastic ruin,

with a few habitable rooms in case they should be needed. Having an abundance of magnificent genuine ruins, many of them in sad need of care, Englishmen will persist in building sham ones.

But there was a charitable motive at the root of his project for which Beckford has never had credit. He aimed to give employment to a number of laboring people in the surrounding country who were in desperate need of help. The comparatively simple early design was swallowed up in the gorgeous conception that grew out of it. Any one who has the costly and incurable disease of building, or better yet, has a friend who has it, will understand how this came about. Beckford's complaint became violent. Having now determined to build on a great scale, he was so short-sighted as to insist on building rapidly. The man was a compound of English reserve and American 'hustle.' He had a morbid passion for seeing things done in a hurry.

Fonthill Abbey was designed by James Wyatt, whom it is the fashion to abuse. Beckford was once asked whether he himself furnished the plan. 'No,' he replied; 'I have sins enough to answer 'for, without having that laid to my charge.' The structure was cruciform, with a central tower nearly three hundred feet high. The entrance-

hall was lofty, the galleries of immense length, and the place as a whole must have been a resort for the finest collection of draughts in England. What comfort could there have been in a causerie in the Octagon Room, which was thirty-eight feet in diameter and a hundred and twenty feet high. The very curtains that hung in the arches of that room measured fifty feet from top to bottom. Perhaps the guests never sat there, only shivered, and exclaimed, and passed on.

The tower was the most spectacular feature. In May, 1800, it collapsed during a severe storm. When Beckford was told of it he expressed regret that he had not been there to see it go, and at once ordered the reconstruction. He wrote his friend Sir Isaac Heard that 'after a Somersault very nearly 'performed in the higher Regions of the Air, 'down came Boards, Beams and Scaffold poles; 'but so compactly and genteelly as not to have 'shaken a single Stone of the main Edifice.' Whatever the failings of Wyatt and his men they deserve credit for the erection of a tower that would fall, since fall it must, in a compact and genteel manner.

The new tower lasted about twenty-five years, and then sank to the ground like its predecessor, but not so harmlessly. Beckford had sold the place by this time. The new owner was as philosophical

as the former one had been in like circumstances. 'Now the house is not too large for me to live in,' he remarked placidly.

The curious had no privileges at Fonthill during the building of the Abbey, and almost none afterward. It might have been described as a showplace that was not intended to be shown. Beckford had good reason to deny that he was a solitary, a recluse. His household consisted of a physician, a musical gentleman, an antiquary (who was also topographer, secretary, and herald), a pair of artists, and a retinue of thirty servants. There were never less than a hundred workmen on the grounds, and on occasion as many as five hundred. The Royal works at Windsor were stopped at one time because the rich commoner had seen fit to quadruple his force of laborers.

When it pleased him to entertain on a magnificent scale Beckford knew how to do it. Traditions of the three days' fête he gave in honor of Lord Nelson, and Sir William and Lady Hamilton, still linger in Wiltshire. Redding's account in his *Memoirs* of Beckford runs to eighteen pages, and he was clearly not exhausted when he stopped.

Samuel Rogers paid a visit to Beckford at Fonthill Abbey, in 1818, and was much impressed by what he saw; and, as we know, Rogers was not

easily impressed. To his mind the woods recalled Vallombrosa, and the Abbey the Duomo at Milan. The spaciousness astonished him. He slept in a bed-room opening into a gallery where lights were kept burning all night — which, from the way in which he speaks of it, would seem to have been a luxury. Beckford read to the guest from his unpublished works and improvised on the piano, 'producing the most charming and novel melo-'dies.' What the actual extent of the host's musical accomplishments was there is no way of finding out. A man may have taken lessons of Mozart and still be a most painful performer. The only reason for thinking that Beckford played badly is that most amateurs do. His love of music was certainly genuine.

When he was past sixty years of age Beckford lost, by a decree of the Court of Chancery, two large West Indian estates that had been in his family a half-century and more. He was still a rich man, but he thought himself not rich enough to keep Fonthill. The place and its contents were announced for sale in 1822. Catalogues were issued by Christie, the auctioneer, and seventy-five thousand copies disposed of at a guinea each. Crowds flocked to see the place, and beds in the neighborhood were at a premium.

Beckford carried off the treasures he valued most, and settled himself in a spacious house (or rather a pair of houses) in Lansdowne Crescent, Bath. There he lived until his death, a period of twenty-two years, enjoying his books and pictures, and astonishing the natives — 'an old breed, I believe' — by his aristocratic ways and his princely improvements on Lansdowne Hill.

To be living in a street must have seemed odd to him after the freedom of Fonthill with its twenty miles of driveway. He would have preferred more room. He hankered for Prior Park, the house built by Ralph Allen, and on coming to Bath treated with the owners for its purchase; but 'they wanted too much for it.' His passion for beautifying the face of Nature found scope for exercise. He laid out gardens on Lansdowne and planted innumerable trees. 'I have crowned Lans-' downe with a forest,' he declared. The handsome tower that he built is still standing. It is a hundred and thirty feet high (Beckford regretted not having made it higher), and the view from the summit is one of the loveliest in all the west of England.

His zeal for collecting increased with the years instead of diminishing. At the age of eighty-four he was as hot in the pursuit of bibliographical

rarities as he could have been at forty. Among his letters, quoted by Melville, is one written barely ten days before his death ; the enthusiastic old gentleman — Heaven bless him ! — wants a sale-catalogue. 'The Nodier ; the Nodier,' he cries. 'I must have that Cat. by any means — and 'at any cost.'

He could be as finical as you please in the choice of a book, and again he would sweep off half the contents of the auction-room. In his young manhood he bought Gibbon's library of six thousand volumes *en bloc*, 'to have something to read when 'I passed through Lausanne.' The best of the books, to the number of twenty-five hundred, were packed for shipment to England but were never sent. Beckford afterward gave away the entire collection.

True bibliophile that he was he had a contempt for bookbinders. His favorite term for them was 'Brutes.' 'The very sound of binding makes me 'shudder,' he once wrote. Other good men besides Beckford have been known to shudder when the word was spoken in their hearing. Who first said that the most implacable enemy a book could have was the bookbinder ?

The author of this new Life does his readers a great kindness by reproducing the two full-length

portraits of Beckford painted by Romney. 'The 'Abbot of Fonthill' was a superb specimen, and could have played the dandy to perfection had he cared for the part. There is also a picture of him in old age, taken on horseback. He used to ride a cream-colored Arabian, and when he went out 'alone' (that is to say, without a personal friend) was attended by three grooms, two behind and one in front 'as an outrider.' His costume consisted of 'a great-coat with cloth buttons, a buff-'striped waistcoat, breeches of the same cloth as 'the coat, and brown top-boots, the fine cotton 'stockings appearing over them, in the fashion of 'thirty or forty years before. He wore his hair 'powdered, and with his handsome face and fine 'eyes looked every inch the fine old English 'gentleman.'

It is the proper thing, I believe, to speak of Beckford as having lived a wasted life, but it must take a great deal of courage to do it. Since this new biography made its appearance it has become increasingly difficult to assume the conventional attitude and to utter the well-worn phrase.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

I

HE present writer has always felt that he owed a great debt of gratitude to the late Sir George Newnes for two noteworthy achievements: the building of the hydraulic lift between Lynmouth and Lynton, and the making of the 'Caxton' thin paper reprints.

Not that these are unalloyed benefits by any means. If a man suffers himself to forget that a hydraulic lift is operated by water he is pretty sure to get his boots splashed; and if he too hurriedly thrusts the reprint into his overcoat pocket he may crush the delicate leaves, which once wrinkled and dog's-eared can never be smoothed out again. He will learn by experience, first, to stand back a little from the car when the splash comes, and second, to keep a rubber band around the book. Then is he prepared to make the best use possible of Sir George Newnes's benefactions.

The thin paper reprint is a wonderful blessing to the man who is forced to go on long railway

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

'Peacock would have been capable, had he lived in our 'day, of taking an advanced stand on the question of 'driving carriages by petrol. But when the wonderful 'invention had become a common nuisance (as well as 'convenience), he would be found assailing the motor-'car with humorous perversity as a machine whose chief 'use was to break the legs of pedestrians and facilitate the 'robbery of country banks and post offices.'

journeys. Armed, for example, with the novels of Thomas Love Peacock in the 'Caxton' series, a book which contains nearly a thousand pages and weighs about seven and a half ounces, he may face with no little composure those enemies he is sure to meet, — indifferent food, noise and dirt unparalleled, scenery spoiled by huge and ugly signs, to say nothing of that down-at-the-heel look which our prosperous country wears when viewed from the railway. One may carry a small library on his person by means of this simple device. The marvel is that no one thought of it until quite recently. Bibles have long been made on thin paper; but for some unexplained reason it did not enter the heads of publishers, up to within five or ten years, that it was possible to treat secular books in the same way.

The portrait of Peacock which heads this volume is a delightful piece of work; but when, for that matter, did Edmund J. Sullivan ever do a piece of work that was not charming? The author of *Crotchet Castle* sits at his ease, one leg crossed over the other, his left elbow resting on the arm of the chair and the fingers pressed lightly against the temples, the abundant white hair fluffed out on either side his aristocratic face, and a most quizzical, most genially satirical expression in the eyes

and on the lips. He looks as if he had just been telling some horrified Oxonian that Oxford had done nothing for the classics but to reprint German editions on better paper, and for mathematics, metaphysics, and history not even that. Peacock, it will be remembered, went to neither public school nor university, and was in the habit of saying that he owed all his success in life to his knowledge of Greek.

The 'Caxton' reprint of the novels would be a more useful book did it contain a short life of the author. Inasmuch as the complete *Works* with the sketch by Edith Nicolls (Peacock's granddaughter) is expensive and none too common, and not every one owns Doctor Garnett's two admirable papers, and Sir Henry Cole's privately printed *Biographical Notes* was made in a really 'limited' edition consisting of only ten copies, it may not be superfluous to recount once more the simple incidents of Thomas Love Peacock's career.

II

He was the son of a London merchant, one Samuel Peacock, head of the firm of Peacock and Pellett, and was born at Weymouth in Dorsetshire, on October 18, 1785. His mother was a daughter of Thomas Love, who commanded the 'Prothee'

under Rodney in the battle off Dominica, and lost a leg during the engagement. Young Peacock was brought up on stories of the sea. For after his father's death, in 1788, Mrs. Peacock made her home at Chertsey with Thomas Love. Between the ages of three and sixteen the boy acquired from his grandfather that lore which gave him an 'almost professional taste for sailors 'and ships.'

If it be true that Thomas Love figures as Captain Hawltaught in *Melincourt* he must have had some traits in common with Smollet's seafaring men. Hawltaught believed in the virtues of grog, and was always ready to utter 'a hearty damn 'against all water-drinkers.'

At the age of eight young Peacock was sent to a school at Englefield Green and remained there five or six years. For the rest he was self-educated. Stimulated by a remark of Harris's (was it 'Hermes' Harris?), who said that it was as easy to be a scholar as a gamester, he began at the age of sixteen a course of systematic reading at the British Museum. His motto seems to have been 'the best books il-'lustrated by the best critics.' He was early an author and had already taken a prize for an essay in verse contributed to the 'Juvenile Magazine.'

When he was nineteen he published a slender

volume of verse, called from the initial poem *The Monks of St. Mark*, a piece which displays much of the boisterousness, and little or none of the wit, of *The Ingoldsby Legends*. Two years later he published a more pretentious volume entitled *Palmyra*, an apostrophe to the ancient city with allusions of the sort requiring elaborate notes, which notes the poets of the time loved to write quite as much as the poem itself. The modern method is to make an allusion and defy the reader to understand it.

The next we hear of Peacock is that he has fallen in love, no surprising circumstance for he was a remarkably handsome young fellow. He became engaged and used to meet his inamorata (clandestinely, Garnett thinks) at the ruins of Newark Abbey a few miles from Weybridge. Then some one interfered, the girl married 'another,' and died the following year. Peacock is said always to have worn a locket 'with her 'hair in it,' a pretty display of sentimentality which he might well have given over after meeting and marrying 'the nymph of Carnarvonshire.'

Disappointed lovers either enlist in the army or go to sea. Peacock chose the latter alternative and became secretary to Sir Home Popham, then in command of the fleet off Flushing. He was completely out of his element, or thought he was. In

a letter to his publisher (November, 1808) he says, 'As to writing poetry, or doing anything 'else that is rational, in this floating Inferno, it is 'almost next to a moral impossibility.' Nevertheless he got some practice in his art by making prologues and epilogues to the plays given on shipboard. He resigned his secretaryship in March, 1809, and went home, making a part of the journey (from Deal to Ramsgate and thence to Canterbury) on foot. Peacock was an indefatigable walker.

In preparation for his long meditated poem, *The Genius of the Thames*, he followed the windings of that river from Trewsbury Mead to Chertsey, one hundred and eighty miles. 'A very de-'cent walk,' he says. The tramp seems to have begun the first week of June, 1809; we are not told when it ended, or whether he really carried out his plan of going the whole distance on foot. Perhaps, like Mark Twain and 'Harris' on their famous walking-tour in Switzerland, he may have got an occasional lift.

The Genius of the Thames, in two parts with arguments and notes in the above-mentioned style of the day, was published in 1810; a second edition, somewhat revised, appeared two years later. The poem is of the sort called 'reflective,' not a

rhymed account of the show places on the river. Even if reprinted in cheap form there would be no danger of its supplanting Salter's *Guide*. It may be read once, possibly twice, and not without pleasure.

Peacock's next volume, *Sir Proteus, a Satirical Ballad, by P. M. O'Donovan, Esq.* (1814), is an amusing skit on contemporary poets, Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Wilson, the 'modish 'bard' W. R. Spencer, and others. While the lines are often telling, the best part of the work is to be found in the caustic notes. *Sir Proteus* was dedicated in terms of extravagant irony to Byron. His lordship read Rogers's copy of the satire, and returned it to the owner with the remark, quoted from Johnson, 'Are we alive after all this 'censure?'

In January, 1810, Peacock made the first of many excursions to Wales. It would seem an inclement month for a walking tour in the mountains, but the vigorous young man liked the look of Cambrian waterfalls in the frost, and of the old overhanging oaks spangled with icicles. From that time Wales played a large part in his life, literary and otherwise. Carnarvonshire is the scene of *Headlong Hall;* and when the party from Crotchet Castle set out on their voyage, in 'four beautiful

'cabined pinnaces,' their goal was the Vale of Llangollen. *The Misfortunes of Elphin* is pure Cambrian as a matter of course.

At Maentwrog he made the acquaintance of Jane Gryffydh, the 'nymph of Carnarvonshire,' whom he describes to his publisher, Hookham, as 'the most innocent, the most amiable, the most 'beautiful girl in existence.' She pleased the classical enthusiast by talking of Scipio, Hannibal, and the Emperor Otho. No modern miss would take the chances of alienating a lover by such rash talk.

Peacock's first meeting with Shelley is said to have taken place at Nant Gwillt, but Garnett gives good reasons for thinking otherwise. The argument will be found in *Essays of a Librarian*, together with the best brief account yet written of the relations between the two young men. Whether they met in Wales, or at Hookham's shop in Old Bond Street, it is evident that they soon became attached to each other. Peacock went with Shelley and his wife when they made their journey to the English Lakes and Edinburgh, in the fall of 1813, and was a constant visitor at their London lodgings in the early part of the winter. Strange things happened between January and July of 1814, but they concern Shelley's biography, not Peacock's.

At the end of August of the following year the two poets took a ten days' rowing excursion up the river, bringing their journey to a close only when they reached a point where 'the cattle stood 'entirely across the stream, with the water scarcely 'covering their hoofs.' Charles Clairmont was one of the party. 'Mrs. Shelley (the second, who 'always bore his name), who was with us, made 'a diary of the little trip, which I suppose is lost.' Shelley himself was not well the first part of the trip. Peacock prescribed three mutton-chops well peppered, believing that his companion was in the way to starve on a diet of tea and bread and butter. The prescription was tried, not once but several times, and effected an almost immediate cure.[1]

Just how Peacock lived during these years is not known. There can have been no great mystery about the question of an income. His wants were seemingly few. He was an only son and made his home with his mother. As the widow of a presumably well-to-do London merchant Mrs. Peacock can hardly have been without resources. Perhaps the new biographies of her son that have been announced will prove that she had a share in the business of Peacock and Pellett. Doctor Gar-

[1] 'Memoirs of Percy Bysshe Shelley' in Peacock's *Works*, edited by Henry Cole, vol. III, p. 423.

nett brings to light the curious fact that Shelley gave Peacock fifty pounds a year to keep off troublesome visitors. Does the phrase mean bores and bailiffs? Shelley disliked both. The stipend can hardly have been paid more than one year, and it must have vastly amused Peacock to find himself in receipt of an income for so unliterary a service.

In 1816 Peacock published his first novel, *Headlong Hall*, a lively little tale in the vein that he was to make peculiarly his own; it was followed by *Melincourt* (1817) and *Nightmare Abbey* (1818). His best and longest poem, *Rhododaphne, or the Thessalian Spell*, also appeared in 1818, a charming thing and not as much read as it deserves to be. As has often been noted, Shelley's influence had something to do in moulding the poem. Perhaps that is one reason why Shelley liked *Rhododaphne*. But Shelley had also praised *The Genius of the Thames*, a very different sort of work. It is not likely that he would have cared much for *Sir Hornbook, or Childe Launcelot's Expedition* (1818), 'a grammatico-allegorical ballad,' one of those literary absurdities which Peacock sometimes wrote, the product of sheer high spirits.

Our energetic author was at work on his fourth novel, the romance of *Maid Marian*, when he was recommended by Peter Auber to the East India

Company and given six weeks to prepare himself for their examination. We are left in the dark as to how it all came about, but Peacock must have told some influential friend that he was ready to take up a regular mode of life. His papers were satisfactory. The examiners' comment was, 'Nothing 'superfluous and nothing wanting.' Peacock and James Mill were taken into the employ of the East India Company at the same time. Mill's salary was fixed at eight hundred pounds, or thereabouts; it is not known what Peacock received.

He had enough, at all events, to justify his settling in a house in Stamford Street, and proposing marriage to Jane Gryffydh whom, by the bye, he had not seen in eight years; the pair had not even exchanged letters. The pretty Welsh girl could hardly have been other than astonished when she opened her lover's epistle and read, 'The great-'est blessing this world could bestow on me would 'be to make you my wife: consider if your own 'feelings would allow you to constitute my hap-'piness. I desire only to promote yours; and I de-'sire only you, for your value is beyond fortune, 'of which I want no more than I have.'

They were married on March 20, 1820. Their eldest child, Mary Ellen, became by a second marriage, Mrs. George Meredith. The *Poems* of

1851, Meredith's first book, is dedicated 'To 'Thomas Love Peacock, Esq. . . . with the pro- 'found admiration and affectionate respect of his 'son-in-law.'

One of Peacock's lesser writings belongs to this year 1820, an essay on 'The Four Ages of Po- 'etry,' first published in Ollier's 'Literary Pocket- 'Book.' Garnett describes it as 'a clever paradox, 'inspired by disappointment at his own failure to 'command attention as a poet. . . .' The essay will be enjoyed for its attack on 'that egregious con- 'fraternity of rhymesters, known by the name of 'the Lake Poets; who . . . wrote verses on a new 'principle; saw rocks and rivers in a new light; '. . . and contrived, though they had retreated 'from the world for the express of seeing nature 'as she was, to see her only as she was not,' and so forth. Shelley thought the piece 'clever and 'false,' and wrote Peacock that he had sent him the first part of an essay designed as 'an antidote' to his 'Four Ages of Poetry.' This was the famous 'Defence of Poetry,' but not quite in the form in which we now have it.

For the novels Shelley had only words of high commendation: 'I am delighted with *Nightmare* '*Abbey* . . . and I know not how to praise suffi- 'ciently the lightness, chastity, and strength of the

'language of the whole.' Yet he seems to have ranked *Melincourt* higher than either *Nightmare Abbey* or *Headlong Hall;* he speaks of it as having 'more of the true spirit,' whatever he meant by that, and as being 'less indefinite' of purpose than the others.

III

Headlong Hall is only indefinite of purpose because the author tried to satirize so many human follies and enthusiasms in so brief a space. The attack is brilliant, but the wittiest of men cannot hope to attack everything in the limits of one small book. Peacock allowed himself only seventy-five pages, which fact would alone account for incomplete development, abrupt transitions, and a huddled ending.

The narrative starts off with a gibe at the expense of the Universities, the first of many to be found scattered through the pages of the novels. Harry Headlong, a typical Welsh squire, though fond of hunting, racing, and drinking 'had actu-'ally suffered certain phenomena called books, to 'find their way into his house.' The reading of them inspires him with a passion to be thought a philosopher and a man of taste. He goes to Oxford 'to inquire for other varieties of the same

'genera, namely, men of taste and philosophers; 'but being assured by a learned professor that there 'were no such things in the University' he beats up the book-shops, the theatres, and other resorts of London to collect dilettanti and savants, and persuade them to spend Christmas at his home in the vale of Llanberris.

Headlong Hall may then be described as a little drama laid at a country house, and presented by a group of lively marionettes. Each figure personifies an idea, is made to talk in his character, and is not allowed to step outside of it for an instant. Mr. Escot, for example, thinks that the world is growing worse, and that the use of animal food is one of the causes. He helps himself to a slice of beef as he argues the point. Mr. Foster thinks that the world is growing better, and that nature intended man to be carnivorous. Mr. Jenkinson has an idea that things are pretty much in a state of equilibrium; the loss is balanced by the gain. He prefers, by the way, a mixed diet. The Reverend Doctor Gaster agrees with him, agrees with everybody who holds sound views on the question of eating and drinking.

These four characters are met with on the road to Headlong Hall. Others presently appear: Mr. Cranium, the phrenological enthusiast, with his

daughter, Miss Cephalis Cranium; Mr. Chromatic with his two blooming girls, Miss Tenorina and Miss Graziosa; Sir Patrick O'Prism, a dilettante painter; Mr. Panscope, an amateur of universal knowledge; and Mr. Milestone, a landscape gardener of high renown, who immediately discovers that the grounds of Headlong Hall 'have never 'been touched by the finger of taste.' We are also introduced to the entire editorial staff of a great Review, who bear severally the appropriate names of Mr. Gall, Mr. Treacle, Mr. Nightshade, and Mr. MacLaurel. And there is a notable guest in the person of Miss Philomela Poppyseed, 'an in-'defatigable compounder of novels.' Squire Headlong's own relations and his very genial and hilarious self may be taken for granted.

The guests amuse themselves as they will, individually and collectively. They chat, sing, walk about the grounds, explore the surrounding country, are entertained with a lecture, a ball, and have a bounteous table and an overflowing cellar at their command. It should be, in so far as it goes, an accurate picture of Cambrian hospitality in the early part of the nineteenth century.

The strength of the little book is to be found in the after-dinner and other discussions. By stripping off every superfluous moral feature and show-

ing his puppets each absolutely dominated by one idea Peacock has produced some very effective satire. The lightness or the severity of the strokes helps one to understand the author's own position. He cares very little how much men befuddle their brains with phrenology, or music, or the laying out of formal plantations; and he cares a great deal when he finds them befuddling other people's brains with a periodical criticism 'that is 'never conducted with a view to the general inter-'ests of literature, but to serve the interested ends 'of individuals, and the miserable purposes of 'party.' Mr. MacLaurel's description of poetry as a sort of merchandise, and his three reasons for taking the part of the people, are in Peacock's best manner. The satire may be grossly unjust, but the essence of satire does not lie in understatement, and the passage is redeemed by the abundant humor.

There is little love-making in *Headlong Hall*, but an extraordinary amount of pairing off in the last chapter. A more farcical ending could hardly have been devised, but the reader is not in the least disturbed thereby. He discovered in the first pages of the book that *Headlong Hall* was not a realistic novel, and that consequently the actions of the characters were not to be measured by standards that would serve in a book like *Pride and Prejudice*.

Melincourt, or Sir Oran Haut-ton came next, a more pretentious work than the other both as to size and purpose. In so far as it concerns the efforts of sundry gentlemen to win the hand (and incidentally the fortune) of Miss Anthelia Melincourt the book may, I suppose, be called a love-story.

This young woman had many admirers, and 'it 'follows, of course, . . . that there were Irishmen 'and clergymen among them.' She entertains a numerous company at her castle in Westmoreland. The adventurers are present, including Lord Anophel Achthar and the Reverend Mr. Grovelgrub, as well as the true men, Mr. Forester, Mr. Fax, Sir Telegraph Paxarett, and Sir Oran Haut-ton. Also the Honorable Mrs. Pinmoney and her daughter, Miss Danaretta Contantina.

There is an *élèvement*, somewhat in the French style. Anthelia disappears, and her friends go forth to seek her. They take their time about it, the reader thinks, and look everywhere but in the place where she is most likely to be found. But their adventures are entertaining. They visit the town of Gullgudgeon just as the country-bank has closed its doors for ever; they dine at Mainchance Villa, the residence of Peter Paypaul Paperstamp, Esq., and renew acquaintance with Mr. Feather-

nest, Mr. Anyside Antijack, and others; and they are entertained for a night at Cimmerian Lodge, the home of 'the poeticopolitical, rhapsodicopro-'saical, . . . transcendental meteorosophist, Moly 'Mystic, Esq.'

Much good talk grows out of these meetings. The satire is mainly directed at Kantian metaphysics, the philosophy of Coleridge, paper money, Quarterly reviews, political turncoats, and placemen of every description, the poetical sort above all. Mr. Feathernest, Mr. Paperstamp, Mr. Killthedead, Mr. Anyside Antijack, and Mr. Vamp are made to avow the most atrocious sentiments, such as the importance of keeping the people ignorant, lest they begin to think for themselves, and the necessity of maintaining rotten boroughs and sinecures. The symposium at Mainchance Villa ends, like one of Gilbert's operas, with a lively quintette, the burden of which is, 'We 'll all 'have a finger in the Christmas Pie,' videlicet, the public purse.

But the heiress is not forgotten. Mr. Forester and Mr. Fax, though willing enough to talk of social reform and political economy by the way, are bent on success. Anthelia is found at last, a prisoner in Lord Anophel's castle by the sea; it is pleasant to learn that she had her harp with her.

In gratitude to Mr. Forester for rescuing her from the clutches of the improper young nobleman she throws herself into his arms. She had been inclining that way for some time.

The entertaining character known as Sir Oran Haut-ton has disturbed some critics. Herbert Paul does not like the idea of an ape's taking in a lady to dinner. It is of course barely possible that it never happened. And if it did the lady was only the Honorable Mrs. Pinmoney.

Just what the satirist's object was in making an educated orang-outang play so large a part in the little drama is not quite clear. But need we suppose that he had an object? Why not accept the sketch, footnotes and all, as a bit of whimsical fooling? To make a man of the ape, give him whiskers, clothing, breeding, a good heart, and put him up as the candidate for a seat in Parliament, is to provide the reader with no little diversion; and that, I take it, is one object of a novel. Peacock may have been merely laughing at Lord Monboddo's theories, though we cannot be sure that he was not also laughing a little at the people whom those theories made hot with anger.

Sir Oran would be worth while if only for his stirring performances at the election. The chapters describing this episode are among the best in

the book. The account of the meeting at the inn with Mr. Sarcastic, the principal candidate, the procession to the borough of Onevote, the address to Mr. Christopher Corporate, the sole elector ('With what awe and veneration must I look on 'one, who is, as it were, the abstract and quintes-'sence of thirty-three thousand six hundred and 'sixty-six people!'), the chairing of Mr. Sarcastic, Sir Oran's objection to being chaired and his manner of registering his protest, the tumult that followed, the wreck of the booths and stalls, and the battle in which mutton pies and hunks of gingerbread serve for missiles, make as delightful an essay in comic satire as one can hope to meet with.

Whether in writing *Melincourt* Peacock has not done much injustice to Wordsworth, Southey, Scott, and Canning is a question apart. The attack is pretty savage at times, but those distinguished men appear to have survived it.

The scene of *Nightmare Abbey*, the third novel, is a picturesque and semi-dilapidated manorial hall on the shore of the German ocean. Peacock's stories are not wanting in geographical variety; we have first the mountains of Wales, then the hills of Westmoreland, and now the fen district of 'the moist county of Lincoln.'

The lord of the manor is a dismal gentleman, one Christopher Glowry, Esq., who wants everything about him dismal, and contrives to have it so. His servants recommend themselves by a long face or a dismal name. His dearest friend is a Mr. Toobad, who goes about exclaiming, 'The devil 'is come among you.' Glowry has one son, Scythrop, dismal like himself, partly by inheritance and partly through blighted love. The youth employs his time in mooning, reading the *Sorrows of Werther*, and devising schemes for reforming the world. He is the author of a treatise entitled 'Philosophical Gas, or a Project for a General Il-'lumination of the Human Mind.' A mechanical bent, coupled with a love of the mysterious for its own sake, leads him to superintend the construction of sliding panels and secret passages in his private quarter of the mansion. It has been agreed by the elders that Scythrop shall marry Mr. Toobad's daughter, Celinda. The young lady is now at school in a German convent, but will have returned to England by the time we reach the fourth chapter.

There is a house-party at *Nightmare Abbey*. Glowry's brother-in-law, Mr. Hilary, comes from London bringing his wife and his orphan niece; Miss Marionetta Celestina O'Carroll is a blooming

and accomplished girl whom Peacock greatly admires, though his admiration does not prevent his giving, over her shoulder, the customary Saxon slap at the Irish. The other guests are Mr. Flosky, a transcendental philosopher; Mr. Listless, a languid gentleman of fashion, with shattered nerves; Mr. Cypress, a poet of the popular lugubrious school; and Mr. Larynx, a clergyman, and a distinct improvement over the Gasters, Grovelgrubs, and Portpipes of the preceding narratives. We have too an absurd pair of characters in Mr. Asterias and his son, who are scientifically interested in fish, and 'perlustrate' the coast in search of a mermaid.

Scythrop falls in love with his cousin Marionetta, and is led a lively dance by the coquettish and charming girl. His father, in a phrase beloved of American stump-speakers, 'views with 'alarm' the progress of the youth's infatuation; he objects to a sunny nature about the house, and besides, Celinda has a fortune in her own right. Mr. Toobad posts up to London in order to bring his daughter down to Lincolnshire, but returns alone. For when the high-spirited girl learned that a husband had been chosen for her, without her having any say in the matter, she disappeared between twilight and dawn and left no address.

Marionetta now perceives a lukewarmness in Scythrop's attitude. Something is in the air. A phantom has been seen in the corridors. A female figure lurks in the moonlight by the sea-shore, and the imagination of Mr. Asterias converts it into the longed-for mermaid. The truth is that when Scythrop went into his study one evening he found a beautiful young woman of the brunette style in possession. She would give no name. 'Call me Stella,' she says. Representing the new emancipated type (but not *too* emancipated, the novelist is very proper), she has been drawn to Scythrop because he loves liberty, and is the author of the treatise on 'Philosophical Gas.' Will he not protect her from an atrocious persecution?

He certainly will, and does. And Celinda Toobad, for it is she, takes refuge in the house where her father is a guest, and has for a protector the imaginative youth who has been designated as her husband. But the mischief is to pay. Scythrop finds that he loves both girls and cannot choose between them. The story ends as it should, in his losing both. Celinda becomes Mrs. Flosky, and Marionetta accepts the hand of Mr. Listless. Scythrop does not commit suicide as he intended because the clock has been put back. Finding himself alive at eight P. M., when by rights he should

have been dead, he decides to keep on living and take an advanced degree in misanthropy.

The farcical and improbable character of the narrative does not prevent its being read for the story alone. But *Nightmare Abbey* will be most enjoyed as a satire on German philosophy and romance, on the lugubrious tendencies of the time as reflected in fiction and poetry, and in side thrusts at a variety of other objects. The various speakers live up to their names, but they are not mere algebraic symbols as in *Headlong Hall*. In giving them greater freedom of movement the author has made them more human. Mr. Flosky (who is, of course, meant for Coleridge) says that he should be sorry if anyone could see the connection of his ideas, and he also makes some extremely sensible remarks on modern fiction. Peacock does better by Flosky than by Mr. Mystic of *Melincourt*, who is not allowed to deviate into sense. Byron is introduced as Mr. Cypress, and the parody of his verse has found its way into the anthologies. Scythrop stands for certain aspects of Shelley. Mr. Listless, who laments that the plebeian habit of eating prevents a gentleman from keeping his stays as tightly laced as they ought to be, is identified with the famous dandy, Sir Lumley Skeffington; but no one, so far as I know, has

assumed that Mr. Glowry was a study of Mr. Timothy Shelley of Field Place.

In his next two novels, *Maid Marian* (1822) and *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (1829), Peacock tried his hand at fiction of a different, though not a newer sort. Both books are admirable, and strongly support a reputation they never could have made for their author independently.

Maid Marian is a forest romance, a picture of life under the greenwood tree, with all the pleasant features emphasized and most of the ugly ones left out. These gay people sleep in the woods and never catch rheumatism. They break the heads of their enemies with the utmost good humor, and the victims take the punishment as a part of the game. Marian plants an arrow in the arm of a knight, extracts it with her own fingers, wraps her scarf about the wound, and the reader knows that there is not the least danger of blood-poisoning. In a word it is a picture of out-of-door existence such as the English excel in making. No wonder that their authors are men of strong imagination. They are compelled to be; for they live in mackintoshes and thick-soled shoes, and write romances like *Maid Marian*.

The book follows the conventional lines, but the handling is incomparable for freshness and

spirit. It is a joyous piece of writing. The narrative moves swiftly; its even flow is never blocked by the satirical comment. Of satire there is an abundance, and of a very enjoyable sort, many a direct stroke at the ideals of the twelfth century, together with oblique strokes at the ideals of the nineteenth. The laws of the forest are capital. One would like to have heard Little John of the 'stentorophonic voice' reading them aloud to the Baron of Arlingford, especially the one touching the very much deranged balance of power among the people.

Maid Marian was dramatized by J. R. Planché and produced at Covent Garden Theatre. Henry Bishop wrote the music. Charles Kemble played a part and 'made a great hit with one song, the 'only one in his career he ever learned to sing.'

The Misfortunes of Elphin is a romance on a Welsh theme, and its substance is taken almost wholly from Welsh sources. *The Book of Taliesin* supplied Peacock with the greater part of his materials. Whether he made a scholarly use of the original tale is a question about which the amateur of literary delights need not bother himself for a moment. The amateur's principal business with good books is to read them, and this particular novel may be read with keen enjoyment

by everybody, including the man who never knew until now that the Cymri had a literature. The proper names, bristling as they do with a wealth of consonants, trouble one a little at first, but one soon gets used to them. The characters begin to live in the initial chapter, and when Seithenyn is introduced, at the very beginning of the second chapter, there is no longer any doubt as to whether the narrative will prove amusing.

A critic cites this novel as an illustration of how it may be possible to treat the tradition 'in a mod-'ern spirit' and yet retain the ancient setting. Peacock 'did this with admirable delicacy and 'tact. His irony never becomes burlesque, and he 'is too much in love with his sources to think of 'handling them rudely.'[1] The scene where Queen Gwenyvar slaps Gwenvach on the face, 'with a 'force that brought more crimson into one cheek 'than blushing had ever done into both,' will shock those whose conception of that great lady is derived wholly from Tennyson's *Idylls*. The incident is quite 'historical,' and is recorded in the Bardic Triads, so Peacock tells the reader, as one of the 'Three Fatal Slaps of the Island of Britain.' Gwenvach was Modred's wife, and now one knows

[1] Maccallum: *Tennyson's Idylls . . . and Arthurian Story from the XVIth Century*, p. 207.

why Modred hated both Arthur and Gwenyvar with such a deadly hatred.

All the critics agree in thinking Seithenyn the real hero of the story. The reader finds that out for himself without their help, but in general he needs to have it pointed out to him that Seithenyn's speech in defence of his attitude on the question of repairing the embankment is a parody on one of Canning's most famous utterances. But what a well-written story that is which permits itself to be read with pleasure even if the under-meanings and contemporary allusions have become obscure through the lapse of time! There are many old tales that need to be retold in just this human and humorous fashion. But where is the story-teller who has the gift to do it?

Crotchet Castle, first published in 1831, is in some ways the most delightful of all Peacock's novels. In form it does not differ much from his other stories of contemporary life. We have the country house (this time by the bank of the Thames), the jolly and open-handed host, the learned, prejudiced, and talkative divine, numerous guests each the embodiment of some fixed idea, two pairs of lovers, plenty of eating and drinking, an excursion up the river and through the canals to the Vale of Llangollen, then a marriage with the promise of

yet another in a very short time, and lastly the reassemblage of the original Crotchet Castle party for the Christmas festivities at Chainmail Hall.

Every reader of the novel must be grateful to Peacock for having given him the privilege of becoming acquainted with the charming Lady Clarinda. Captain Fitzchrome of the story is in love with her. Many of us (the unmarried ones, that is to say) would be too could we meet her in the flesh. She is wholesome, perfectly feminine, and then 'the dear thing can talk.' Her sparring with her lover is in the best vein of light comedy, delicate in touch, roguish, witty in the extreme. And how cleverly she hits off the characteristics of her fellow-guests at Crotchet Castle. Can it be possible that Meredith learned 'a thing or two' from his father-in-law?

Through Lady Clarinda's lips Peacock satirizes the fashionable novel and the methods of pushing publishers. He need not have changed a word had he been planning his satire to meet the needs of our day rather than his own. With the help of Doctor Folliott's 'indefatigable pair of lungs' he assails the craze of the time for diffusing knowledge of all sorts by means of sixpenny tracts. The good, irascible clergyman's cook had taken to reading about hydrostatics, and falling asleep

over the exciting treatise, had upset the candle and nearly burned the house down. Peacock shares Doctor Folliott's scorn of the 'Steam Intellect 'Society' and a certain learned friend (Brougham), 'who is for doing all the world's business as well 'as his own.' Other amusing figures are Mr. MacQuedy an economist, Mr. Skionar a transcendental poet, Mr. Toogood the co-operationist, Mr. Henbane, Mr. Firedamp, and Doctor Morbific.

Mr. Chainmail, the amiable young antiquarian, who sees more good in the twelfth century than in the nineteenth, and who 'laments over the inven-'tions of gunpowder, steam, and gas,' may be compared with Eustace Lyle of Disraeli's *Coningsby*. I think the author rather sympathizes with him (he allowed him to marry the charming Susan Touchandgo), but Peacock may have meant in the person of the medievalist to ridicule certain early phases of the Young England movement. On the other hand are the dates harmonious?[1]

One remarkable character, the defaulting financier, Timothy Touchandgo, does not appear in person. We know him through a letter written to his daughter. He is quite happy in America, and has already become a person of consequence in

[1] Saintsbury: 'The Young England Movement,' in *Miscellaneous Essays*, p. 267.

one of the new slave-holding states. 'The people 'here know very well that I ran away from Lon- 'don, but most of them have run away from some 'place or other; and they have a great respect for 'me, because they think I ran away with some- 'thing worth taking. . . .' After reading this letter, and that of Roderick Robthetill, Mr. Touchandgo's factotum, the reader asks himself how Peacock came to fasten on so many points that Dickens made use of twelve years later in *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

His last novel, *Gryll Grange*, was first printed in 'Fraser's Magazine,' in 1860. He had reached the age of seventy-five and had lost none of his intellectual vivacity. Nearly thirty years had elapsed since he produced *Crotchet Castle*, and although many things had come from his pen in the meantime, they were none of them of the sort which would help a satirical novelist 'to keep 'his hand in.' Now he takes up the old air and plays an entirely new set of variations on it. He is as inventive as ever, almost as brilliant, besides having gained in mellowness and urbanity. It is well known that he tried to make atonement in *Gryll Grange* for some of the causticities which so delighted everybody but the victims in the earlier novels. For example, he created Mr. MacBorrow-

dale, who represents his apology for such laughable monstrosities as Mr. MacLaurel and Mr. MacQuedy.

No one ever thinks of reading one of Peacock's novels for the sake of the plot; yet in *Gryll Grange* more than in the other books the interest is sustained by reason of the complications in which the lovers find themselves. Mr. Falconer's embarrassment between the claims of that Arcadian household of his and the growth of his passion for Miss Gryll, Lord Curryfin's gradual awakening to the significance of Miss Niphet's existence, and then the difficulties that Harry Hedgerow meets with in his wooing of Dorothy — all combine to give an air of reality to the little drama; one feels that it is a matter of some moment how these people settle their affairs of the heart.

What sends us to the novel for the second and third time is the good talk. Here is a book filled to the brim with old-fashioned ideas of the sort we expect and want to hear from a witty and cultivated old gentleman. Doctor Opimian's tirades against America are in Peacock's best manner, and represent his actual thought. The prospect of being able to converse by telegraph across the Atlantic awakens no enthusiasm on the Doctor's part: 'I have no wish to expedite communication

'with the Americans. If we could apply the power 'of electrical repulsion to preserve us from ever 'hearing anything more of them, I should think 'we had for once derived a benefit from science.' Lord Curryfin comes to the defence, seconded by Mr. Gryll; but it is of no use. Doctor Opimian's mind is made up.

Now here is a fact worth remarking. Opimian and his inventor are one in many particulars. There is a heartiness in the clergyman's denunciations which is unmistakable. He cannot stomach the modern pride of scientific achievement. The gain to the world is far less than the world in its vanity thinks. Collisions and wrecks are the chief result of this present-day 'insanity for speed.' Machinery 'has substituted rottenness for strength in the 'thing made, and physical degradation in crowded 'towns for healthy and comfortable country life 'in the makers.' With much more to the same purpose.

But the satirist who delighted to represent Doctor Opimian fulminating against 'improvement' was the very man who held to the belief, against all thinkers to the contrary, that it was possible for steam-driven vessels to make long voyages — voyages of thousands of miles, that is to say. As early as 1834 he was giving evidence before Parlia-

mentary committees on the question of navigating the Euphrates. Two vessels, built at his instance for the East India Company's Red Sea and Bombay service, made the voyage around the Cape of Good Hope. In 1839 six of these craft made the same journey. Peacock calls them 'my iron 'chickens.' He was no doubt responsible for the classical names that four of them bore. Being built for river service they drew but five feet of water, and were fitted with sliding iron keels for the deep-sea part of the trip.[1]

Whimsical pessimist that he was Peacock would have been capable, had he lived in our day, of taking an advanced stand on the question of driving carriages by petrol. But when the wonderful invention had become a common nuisance (as well as convenience), he would be found assailing the motor-car with humorous perversity, as a machine whose chief use was to break the legs of pedestrians and facilitate the robbery of country banks and post-offices. As Doctor Opimian our satirist has a royal time. The reader takes endless delight in hearing his declamations on cookery, the classics, spirit-rapping, modern wives, clubs (an anti-social institution), the science of pantopragmatics, and the

[1] Edith Nicolls : 'Biographical Notice' in *The Works of Thomas Love Peacock*, vol. 1, p. xlii.

poetical mistakes of Moore, Longfellow, and Tennyson. I am not sure that *Gryll Grange* does not wear as well as the best of the earlier books.

IV

'Literature was at the most Peacock's staff. His 'crutch was the India House, where he seems to 'have done as little work for his pay as he conscien-'tiously could.' So writes Herbert Paul; but the sentences would seem, in the light of what Garnett tells us, to need revision. And Miss Nicolls attributes her grandfather's literary inactivity through twenty years (1831 to 1852) to his work with the East India Company. He retired on 'an ample pension' in 1856. Now he was free to write; and he *did* write — not *Gryll Grange* alone, but the papers entitled 'Horæ Dramaticæ' and his singularly interesting reminiscences of Shelley. Unless for a visit to his friend Lord Broughton, he seldom left Halliford, the quiet village by the Thames, where he had made his home for years. He lived among his books, enjoyed his garden, kept May Day in the old English fashion, read Dickens, and always lighted his bedroom fire from the top.

Peacock died on January 23, 1866, and was buried in the New Cemetery at Shepperton. Coming up the lane from the quaint village square and

entering the enclosure, one finds the tomb a few yards to the right. The inscription is nearly obliterated. The pilgrim who has sought out this quiet spot because of his liking for the brilliant satirist will, perhaps, have his interest heightened by recalling that the man who is buried here was Shelley's friend.

A VIRTUOSO OF THE OLD SCHOOL

(CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE)

HERE are at least two methods of biographical study. By the first method a notable character is treated as the centre of the reader's interest, and all other characters, whether great or small, become subsidiary. Study on this plan gives us the typical modern biography, an elaborate, ordered, exhaustive treatise, rich in details, garrulous over the question of ancestry, — a book more interesting than a novel, and sometimes, as in the case of Henley's *Life of Burns*, more shocking than the revelations of a divorce court. It is a classic literary form, orthodox, time-honored. We are familiar with its characteristics. Though subject to infinite variations, it will never be radically changed, and it can hardly be improved upon.

The second method of biographical study takes a character of minor importance, traces his career, and notes the points of contact between his life and the lives of his great contemporaries. We are interested in this minor character partly for him-

CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

Altogether unlike other people he must have been, 'with 'his green umbrella, its crosier-shaped horn handle and 'its long brass point; with his thread stockings, and his 'shoes — of the kind which our fathers called pumps — 'tied with profuse ribbon; with his ever faded frock coat, 'and his cravat of that downy bulging character which 'Brummell repealed.'

self, and very much because of the people whom he has known.

To be sure, the small man is sometimes handled as if he were of major importance; his life has been written with a minuteness not justified by the quality and the amount of his genius. Such application of what I call the orthodox method often spoils a good biographical sketch to make an unwieldly biography. This zeal, untempered by discretion, produces vast 'authorized' lives of small though most worthy persons.

The second method of biographical study does not have for its object an overexaltation of modest and slender powers; it aims simply to enlarge our knowledge of a given period by viewing that period as it is expressed in the life of a man who was distinctly of his time; who was normal, observant, unusually sane; and who had sufficient genius to be markedly differentiated from people who have mere yearning and appreciation without potency and knowledge. Biographical study after this plan is most illuminating. At the hands of a scholar equipped for the work it might even yield important results.

Take for illustration such a book as the *Letters of Thomas Lovell Beddoes*. There would be no great difficulty in making an idol of Beddoes. People

have been found prostrating themselves before a less gifted poet than the author of *Death's Jest Book*. Let us, however, take him at his own low and melancholy estimate, when he trembled at the thought of a fashionable publisher, believed he would have to print at his own expense, and 'could hardly expect to get rid of one hundred 'copies by sale.' Let us read the small volume of his letters with a view to finding out how it all struck a contemporary. The first letter, written in February, 1824, shows 'three poor honest ad-'mirers of Shelley's poetry' trying to see their way financially to print an edition of two hundred and fifty copies of Shelley's Posthumous Poetry. Beddoes was one of the honest admirers; Thomas Forbes Kelsall and Bryan Waller Procter were the other two. Here is a powerful side-light on the history of Shelley's poetical reputation. Nearly two years had passed since the great poet's death, and three honest admirers were trying to launch a slender little edition of posthumous verses by the author of the *Adonais*. The same letter tells us that Simpkin and Marshall were selling a 'remain-'der' of two hundred and fifty copies of *Prometheus Unbound* — Ollier's edition of course — '*at a 'reduction of seventy per cent!*' A copy of that edition will now sell for a hundred dollars.

A few pages more and we shall again see how it strikes a contemporary. Beddoes wants to know who is to be the reigning celestial attraction, now that Shelley has gone; is it to be 'vociferous Dar-'ley' or 'tender, full-faced L. E. L., the milk-and-'watery moon of our darkness'? Beddoes knew poetry when he read it, and could not be deceived into thinking a thing good because the public trooped after it. One needed to know the units of that public, their standards of literary taste, in order to find out whether their rapture meant anything. In those days, L. E. L.'s poetry did not need to be sold at a discount of seventy per cent, and Darley was thought by many good judges to be 'more promising' than Tennyson; but to Thomas Lovell Beddoes he was 'vociferous Darley.'

In a letter written in 1825 Beddoes speaks of 'Mr. Thomas Campbell,' who has in some news-paper 'a paltry refutation of some paltry charge 'of plagiarism regarding his paltry poem in the 'paltry Edinburgh,' etc.; and in a subsequent paragraph he declares that 'we ought to look back 'with late repentance and remorse on our intoxi-'cated praise, now cooling, of Lord Byron, — such 'a man to be so spoken of when the world possessed 'Goethe, Schiller, Shelley!' Beddoes was, I believe, much too good-natured to have printed this

remark about Campbell while Campbell was alive. But if we may not say what we think in our letters among our private friends, where are we to be at liberty to speak? The quotation shows how one level-headed critic of that time failed not to see that Campbell was paltry, and that Byron had been praised with a praise begotten of intoxication rather than of cool, amiably disposed, but rigorously just poetic insight. The criticism is of the more value because it was not written for publication, and because it was not the angry cry of a neglected poet, wounded by neglect, and jealous of the attention and the dollars bestowed upon other poets.

If the letters of Beddoes convince me of anything, they convince me of this: that he was a good fellow, pathetic in spite of himself, deeply humiliated in his literary productivity, not because the public refused to like his verses, but because he could not honestly like them himself. Such a man does not sneer at other poets for the bitter pleasure of sneering. We have a right to suspect the motives of men who publicly assail the work of successful co-laborers in the same field. For example, Percy Fitzgerald should never have attacked Birkbeck Hill's edition of Boswell; if it needed to be done, it were better done by some

man who had not himself an edition of the same book on the market.

We who have survived a late grotesque literary craze cannot but read with deepest interest Beddoes's letter, dated Zurich, 1837, in which he welcomes indications that the English dramatic genius is not, as he supposed, dead. He has read 'extracts which certainly indicate a beating of the 'pulse, a warming of the skin, and a sigh or two 'from the dramatic lady Muse, as if she were 'about to awake from her asphyxy of a hundred 'years.' The next sentence shows that the reference is to Browning, whose *Strafford* was being talked of. The 'Examiner,' it seems, was 'quite 'rapturous.'

This takes one back to those happy days when a man could read Browning's poetry because he liked it, days before the Furnivalls and the Kingslands had begun shrilly to demand that the public bow the knee, days when a man did not feel that he was the victim of a gigantic conspiracy to make him read Browning. It is well not to speak flippantly of any literary mania productive of as much good, on the whole, as was the Browning craze; yet that movement is hardly in the right direction which looks toward the glorification of So-and-So's poetry rather than the glorification

of that divine thing Poetry. Browning was not an isolated fact. There are people who have read *Sordello*, and have never read *The Earthly Paradise*. This is simple lunacy.

Many suggestive points are brought out by a reading in Beddoes's letters, provided we keep always before us the idea that these letters are the clue by which we learn something about the manners and the contemporaries. The book may be studied for itself, but it will serve its highest purpose when it becomes the key to a better understanding of the literary period in which Beddoes lived.

I have thought that a happy application of this method might be made in the case of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe. He was, indeed, a Virtuoso of the Old School, one of the last of his race. In spite of the modern note in his letters, there is yet a quality which suggests old furniture and old books, old hangings and old pictures, faded flowers and mildewed letters, an aroma of now forgotten perfumes, and the breath of ancient scandals which have become historic. He was a man predestined to be quaint and old-fashioned. His garments were venerable, and had apparently come down to him from a former generation. Nobody knew where he got them, and nobody

dared to ask. This was true of him, of course, only in the later part of his life; there must have been a time when his dress met the requirements of the arbiters of taste. The secret of good dressing largely consists in conforming with the mode without seeming to conform. Kirkpatrick Sharpe was so far from being a nonconformist that he must have been for years overpunctilious. In the course of time, his devotion to cravats declined as his devotion to bric-à-brac increased. By neglecting one or two points in the change of fashion he fell behind, and the coming generations looked upon him as an oddity, a 'character,' as we say. The writer of a lively bit of post-mortem portraiture, which appeared in 'The Scotsman' just after the distinguished virtuoso's death, remarks, 'We had always the idea that Sharpe never thought 'he dressed differently from other people.' He did so dress. Altogether unlike other people he must have been, 'with his green umbrella, its 'crosier-shaped horn handle and its long brass 'point; with his thread stockings, and his shoes '— of the kind which our fathers called pumps '— tied with profuse ribbon; with his ever faded 'frock coat, and his cravat of that downy bulging 'character which Brummel repealed. The greater 'part of the whole costume was exactly as he had

'worn it in his college days in the preceding cent-'ury.' This was written in 1851.

Such a man might well have seemed an oddity to an irreverent generation which knew not the laws determining the cut of a coat in 1798. People used to speculate on the mystery of Kirkpatrick Sharpe's clothes. It was not wonderful that he should have them, but that he should *continue* to have them, decade after decade. 'It is possible 'that some profuse wardrobe of early days may have 'proved a sort of granary to him; but we have 'sometimes thought that an expert tradesman, 'who had by accident a reserve of ancestral stock, 'had found him a useful duct for draining off the 'unsalable merchandise.'

Kirkpatrick Sharpe early acquired a reputation as a letter-writer. People who corresponded with him begged him to write oftener. This was a great compliment, for in those days it cost a man twenty-five cents to receive a letter; the recipient was therefore not to be blamed for desiring the worth of his money. That his friends were willing to invest this sum in anything Sharpe chose to write may be inferred from what John Marriott says, namely, that he has the comfortable assurance that his blood vessels 'are all in good repair; for had 'any of them been in a ticklish situation, they

'must have yielded to the nearly hysterical laugh-'ter to which some parts [of your letter] gave 'rise.'

Lady Charlotte Bury called Kirkpatrick Sharpe 'the modern Walpole.' She even ventured the statement that he surpassed Walpole in the art of letter-writing. 'To me,' says the Lady Charlotte, 'Mr. Sharpe's style is far more agreeable; and the 'knowledge that his clever and amusing letters are 'written without any study or correction enhances 'their merit in a great degree.' She was so convinced of his cleverness that she made no scruple about printing a number of his letters while he was yet alive. This led Sharpe to anathematize the lady, and almost entirely to stop writing letters save to people whom he could trust. He had greatly enjoyed the reputation for cleverness, wit, and sarcasm, and there must have been satisfaction in the knowledge that his letters were thought good enough to hand about; but thirty years later, when those letters were dragged into the glare of public print, their author was fain to characterize them as 'silly and impertinent.'

Why do gossip and scandal of a hundred years ago often have a romantic, mellow, fascinating quality, while, as everybody knows, modern gossip and scandal are unspeakably detestable, brutal,

dull? Why is it that we can read with pleasure in old diaries and letters of doings and sayings from which we would turn with disgust were they translated into nineteenth-century equivalents and printed in a newspaper? 'It must be,' as a critic suggests, 'that *chroniques scandaleuses*, like wine, 'discard through lapse of time the acridity of new-'ness, and acquire a bouquet.'

Without question, Kirkpatrick Sharpe's letters amused his correspondents because they were filled with a type of scandal which we do not put into letters nowadays, and because they were written with a freedom of speech which we explain, when we find it in the handwriting of our forefathers and foremothers, by saying, 'That 's the way they 'used to talk.' Probably some of them did talk 'that way,' and some did not. Even in letters to his mother and sisters Sharpe has allusions and anecdotes which would not be tolerated among us. This will need to be set down to the account of that indefinite something called 'the times.' Moreover, Sharpe was frequently led into making an unsavory allusion, not from the love of it, but from disgust; just as people with sensitive noses must needs call the attention of others to ill odors which might else have gone unperceived, thanks to beneficent colds and dulled nerves.

Sharpe's correspondence fills two octavo volumes of six hundred pages each. Not a page is lacking in the element of interest. One could wish that in this mass of epistolary composition there had been more letters from Sharpe's pen, even if it had deprived us of a letter or two from Earl This or Lady That. But the student of manners will be grateful for it as it is. Nothing here is useless. Sharpe's life will probably never be written; there is no reason why it should be. But suppose that it were to be written, in a three-hundred-page volume. His ardent admirers would have some difficulty in justifying the existence of those three hundred pages, but the twelve hundred pages of letters justify themselves. They are documents which throw a flood of light on the intimate life of the times. They may be read for amusement, and they will furnish rather more of it than many a novel over which the public is dulling its brain; but they serve their high purpose when they help us to reconstruct now obliterated social conditions. Nothing is more difficult than to fashion in our minds a picture of the past, even when that past is not far distant. Such a conception we must have; otherwise, half our reading goes for naught, and every historical event is liable to distortion. This book is rather more useful

than a formal tract on conditions of life in the first quarter of this century. It abounds only in hints, but hints such as are believed to be, to the wise, sufficient. The most required is that the reader shall have his mind alert; that he shall view each fact, not as something detached, but as the symbol of a thousand other facts, with each of which it holds an indestructible relation.

Sharpe's own history was without event. He was born at Hoddam Castle in 1781. At the age of seventeen he matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford. In 1802 he became a Bachelor of Arts, and four years later took his Master's degree. He contributed to 'The Anti-Jacobin Review,' and to the third volume of Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*. He had a circle of friends who admired him, and he fenced himself in from the vulgar, whom he heartily detested. He made a few visits to London and to the homes of his intimates. He knew Shelley and 'loathed' him, but he saw the merit of Shelley's poetry. He was an artist. He made sketches both grave and gay. His work shows immense promise and not a little fulfilment. The same criticism holds with respect to his literary efforts. His failure in either department may be explained on the old theory that Sharpe was too much of a gentleman to be either an artist or an

author; that is to say, he who plays the violin in public, or writes books, or puts his paintings on exhibition with a view to selling them, parts with a measure of his self-respect. He exposes his mind, and to do this is shameful. The redeeming feature is that, while the artist is sacrificed, the world may perhaps be benefited. In the majority of cases, however, both the artist and the public are sacrificed. Kirkpatrick Sharpe 'felt two natures 'warring within him,' and was equally averse to literary total abstinence and to literary debauchery.

He passed the latter part of his life in Edinburgh, where he accumulated his extraordinary collection of books, pictures, and antiquities. To the people who knew him in the forties he must have appeared like a survival from the days of the Regency dandies. He died in 1851, having outlived his friend Sir Walter Scott by nearly twenty years.

No record of his talk exists, but if his spoken utterances bore any relation to his written style, he was caustic, witty, daring. His letters are filled with light touches which are the salt of such composition. No matter how trivial in themselves, they are flavored with his wit in a way to keep one reading. He speaks of a cold snap at Oxford which carried off so many old people that 'there

'was not a grandfather or grandmother to be had 'for love or money.' He sets forth the sad quandary of his aunt, 'driven out into the wide world 'with a small helpless family of chiffoniers, writ-'ing-tables, and footstools.' He mentions a certain baronet, whose circumstances are such that 'he 'must surely get a berth in jail if he procureth not 'one in Parliament.' He describes a young lady at a ball, 'dressed in muslin so thin that it left no 'room for conjecture.'

In his youth Sharpe had a cordial Scots hatred for everything English, except English literature. His letters written home from college are filled with sarcasm at the expense of English manners. He outgrew this, and viewed with positive distress the approach of that time which would put an end to his college life. Young men of this day, with their thick-soled shoes and golf stockings, are a striking contrast to the young exquisites of Oxford in 1802. Sharpe used to look back and marvel that he ever went about Oxford, in winter, 'in 'silk stockings and pumps.' They were great dandies. Stapleton, one of Sharpe's friends, performed a certain journey in comfort, with the single misfortune of having 'lost his scent bottle.' And it was the Honorable William Burrell who, having had a fit of sickness, told Sharpe that his nurse

was alarmed about him when she saw how his stays had to be taken in every day.

These facts help to an understanding of the external differences. Nothing accentuates more the intellectual differences between university boys of that day and this than their attitude in that olden time toward poetry, or what they firmly believed to be such. All were poets, 'and not ashamed.' It is laughable to see how gravely they used to exchange copies of their verses, and how courageously they pretended to like one another's bad poetry. With all their solemnity, it is difficult not to suspect them, as the old Shakespearean slang has it, of 'kindly giving one another the bob.'

Kirkpatrick Sharpe's companions were devoted to him, but I have a suspicion that it is possible to explain a measure of their devotion on the principle of *Agree with thy gifted acquaintance quickly lest he make a caricature of thee*. Sharpe had a caustic pencil as well as a caustic pen. Such a drawing as that of Queen Elizabeth Dancing shows terrible sardonic force. A man might well wish to keep on the good side of an artist who, peradventure, might elect to make game of lesser personages than Queen Elizabeth.

We Americans need to remind ourselves, as we read these letters, of the custom obtaining at

Oxford for noblemen to wear gold tassels on their caps. These were called tufts; whence, tuft-hunters. The concourse of titled youths was particularly great during one year; and Sharpe was moved to say that 'one's eyes required green spectacles to 'preserve them from the glare of the golden tufts 'among these peers.' He was often sarcastic over the forms of deference prescribed by the University toward young noblemen, and then he had moments of wishing he wore a tuft himself.

Two of Sharpe's college friends were 'Topo-'graphical' Gell and the Honorable Keppel Craven. Gell became famous through his explorations in Greece and the Troad, whence he acquired the epithet of 'topographical.' Keppel Craven wrote books of travel. Both these gentlemen were in after years attached to Queen Caroline's petty court, and, at her trial, were called upon to testify to the propriety of her conduct, which they honorably did. Shelley dawned on Oxford in 1810. He was then noted chiefly for his eccentricities. Sharpe speaks ironically of him as 'a Mr. Shelley who lives upon 'arsenic, aquafortis, and half an hour's sleep in the 'night.'[1] Sharpe later declared that Shelley *tried* to make people think he lived upon arsenic. Some

[1] In a letter of 1811, written during one of Sharpe's many visits to Oxford.

people would believe it. The poet had 'the natu-'ral desire to propagate a wonder.' It is easy to see how the legendary element began early to assert itself in Shelley's history. When a myth forms concerning a man in his college days, we may be sure that man will furnish interesting problems for his biographers. In a letter written in October, 1811, Sharpe announces to his correspondent that 'the 'ingenious Mr. Shelley hath been expelled from 'the University on account of his atheistical pam-'phlet. . . . He behaved like a hero, . . . and de-'clared his intention of emigrating to America.' Shelley emigrated, however, no farther than Edinburgh, where Sharpe encountered him again. In a letter to Mrs. Balfour, Sharpe says: 'I impu-'dently write this to beg that you will permit me 'to bring to your party Mr. Shelley — who is a 'son of Sir Timothy Shelley — and his friend Mr. 'Hutchinson. They are both very gentlemanly 'persons, and dance quadrilles eternally.'

One striking letter in this collection helps us to form an idea of Walter Scott as he appeared in days before he became famous; when there was as yet neither *Lady of the Lake* nor *Waverley*, and Scott was known as an enthusiastic collector of old ballads, which ballads he was given to 'spouting' rather more than most people cared to hear. In

a letter to his mother, dated July, 1803, Sharpe writes: 'The Border Minstrel paid me a visit some 'time since on his way to town, and I very cour- 'teously invited him to breakfast. He is dreadfully 'lame, and much too *poetical*. He spouts without 'mercy, and pays compliments so high-flown that 'my self-conceit, tho' a tolerable good shot, could 'not even wing one of them; but he told me that 'he intended to present me with the new edition 'of his book, and I found some comfort in that.' Other sentences in the letter indicate that Sharpe did not take to the Border Minstrel. In a year and a half from that visit Scott had become famous through the publication of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Before many years acquaintance became intimacy. Scott had a real admiration for Kirkpatrick Sharpe's powers, and continually urged him to turn the genius and spirit which delighted his friends to the instruction and amusement of the public. This Sharpe never did, because he had the virtuoso temperament.

People who have had to do with victims of the collecting habit will know what I mean. A small boy was once heard to say that his mother was 'the greatest collector of busted junk in the state 'of New York.' That mother probably had the virtuoso temperament, while the boy had not.

Women are not usually interested in junk. Mrs. Gereth was; but Mrs. Gereth was an exception.[1] The virtuoso temperament is fussy; it busies itself about the marks on china, the niceties of adjectives, the glorifying misprints of first editions. To be a collector means in general to have nerves. This type of mind studies how to avoid shocks, and is itself shocked about things which most people are content not to notice. The virtuoso has a horror of being useful, because to be useful comes pretty near to being vulgar. He plans works, but never carries them out. He is bored by people with a purpose; they are so insistent, and magnify their office. He protects himself from bruises. He publishes his books anonymously, not from the wish to be unostentatious, but from sheer disgust at the thought of the world's coarse abuse or even coarser approval.

The virtuoso temperament will not permit a man to go with the multitude, even if they are bound heavenward. When people stare after a prodigy, whether of celestial origin or the opposite, *he* refuses to look. Kirkpatrick Sharpe would not have read a line of *Quo Vadis*, nor can you imagine him standing on the curb to look at a squad of returning Rough Riders. He liked the sun,

[1] *The Spoils of Poynton*, by Henry James.

the moon, and the stars, but he disliked comets. He 'spoke disrespectfully' of the comet of 1811, which was very popular. 'Oh, this tiresome comet; '... it nightly ruins my temper, for all the peo- 'ple in this mansion have got nothing else of an 'evening to do but to look at it; so there 's talk 'about it, too tedious — with every ten minutes a 'casement cast up, with a current of cold, damp, 'toothachy air, and a provoking exclamation of '"Dear, how very clear the tail is to-night! do 'come and look at it," which I never do by any 'chance.' He professed to think that a comet's tail was 'the dullest of all possible tails.' 'I would 'not give one twinkle of my parrot's for all the 'comet tails in the universe!' Here is the virtuoso temperament to excess. It sniffs at the peacock splendors which are apparent to all the world, and says, 'My parrot has a more interesting tail.'

The virtuoso is useful in spite of himself. We may not dismiss him off-hand, and thank our stars that we are not as he; for he colors the flat, dull tones of ordinary existence. His cynicism, if that be the word, his peevishness, his acrimony, are a sharp sauce to the boiled fish. Quiescent ox-eyed good-nature is terribly depressing. I would not have all the world to be cynical, but a world without cynics would be very tedious. It is our duty

to discourage the cynicism of vain, dull, affected, and unsuccessful people, but rather to welcome the trait in men of ability and discrimination.

I say that the virtuoso is useful in spite of himself, not alone for the stringent quality of his temper, but because that very defect of taste which prompts him to collect queer and unusual things, to amass scraps of recondite learning, to take a morbid interest in more or less morbid facts, — this very freakishness of taste enables the virtuoso oftentimes to furnish the key to an historical or genealogical mystery. Kirkpatrick Sharpe could give Walter Scott valuable hints now and then, but, if one may emphasize the obvious, it would have been impossible for him to write a *Waverley* or a *Guy Mannering*. To his contemporaries, however, he seemed quite capable of such a performance. They looked with near-sighted eyes at the display of antiquarian knowledge and of local geographical information, and said he must certainly have done it. The Marchioness of Stafford wrote to him that she could not contrive to fish out of Walter Scott whether Sharpe was, as had been suspected, the author of *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering*. 'But this silence with which you have been 'reproached,' continues the marchioness, 'led me 'to suspect something of that kind might have

'been the case; and many traits in those works 'encouraged me in the idea. You have, if this is 'the case, much reason to be satisfied with the 'success of both [novels], for it is only disputed 'which is the best, and they are read and studied 'by people of all kinds, and are so much in fash-'ion that many pretend to understand the dialogue 'in the latter who cannot possibly comprehend a 'word of it.'

Scott probably enjoyed being catechized on the subject; but I cannot help thinking that Sharpe must have had a pang in realizing how absolutely out of his power was any such literary performance. Sharpe's admirers appear to have been entirely convinced. One of his college friends, E. B. Impey, son of the famous chief justice of Bengal, writes to him in 1821: 'I have been for these last 'five or six years pluming myself upon my saga-'city in tracing your style in many passages of the 'Scots novels which are so deservedly popular, parti-'cularly the earlier ones. I don't expect you to set 'me right if I am in error, and still less to divulge 'a secret which is so perseveringly withheld from 'all the rest of the world — tho' I cannot compre-'hend the motive of it. But I have a right to quar-'rel with you for not sending me a copy of the 'books of which you are avowedly the author.'

Among the many letters from Sir Walter Scott in this book, one in particular recalls a thrilling chapter in Edinburgh history. Scott, in sending the narrative of Mrs. Macfarlane to Kirkpatrick Sharpe, declares it to be 'quite a peaceful, quiet 'tale to what our doctors can quote! I am told,' says Scott, 'no prudent maiden walks out a-nights 'without buttering her mouth, that the black 'plaister may not adhere.'

This is a half-jesting allusion to the gruesome murders by a method called 'burking,' — after William Burke, who was the most conspicuous adept at it. Burke and his associate Hare smothered their victims, and sold the bodies to Knox, the famous anatomist. Fifteen unfortunates, male and female, died by their hands. The disclosure of the horrible facts threw Edinburgh into a state of terror. People dared not leave their houses after dark. Laborers coming home from work walked in squads for protection. Sharpe testifies to the universal fear which prevailed, but adds that for all that 'the murders only made us talk nonsense 'the more.'

Burke was hanged. The public flocked to behold the comfortable sight, as they would have gone to a circus. One Robert Seton writes to Kirkpatrick Sharpe: 'I respectfully beg leave to men-

'tion that I will be happy to give you a share of 'one window, on the morning of the execution 'of Burke. Mr. Stevenson, bookseller, wished one 'window for Sir Walter Scott and yourself, but 'on account of the number that has applied, that 'will be out of my power. But I shall be happy 'to accommodate Sir Walter and yourself with a 'share of one.'

In his latter years Sharpe became a zealous and untiring guardian of the antiquities of Edinburgh. Every proposition to alter or to destroy an historic landmark of the ancient city was sure to arouse his fighting blood. He would write scathing letters in the newspapers, and pleading letters to his friends. He would threaten those influential noblemen who were at ease in Zion with the curses of endless generations of antiquaries, should this great evil be done. His influence was for the best in these matters, and he was the instrument of saving much which might else have been improved out of existence. His taste was catholic, and he was almost equally solicitous for the salvation of an old chair or the house of John Knox.

I have indicated but a few of many points which may be brought out by a reading of these volumes. They illustrate a wide range of topics, from the history of dental surgery to the history of lit-

erature; and they illustrate their subject the better because they were not written for such purpose. I read a treatise on the art of stopping teeth, and am unmoved; I read Kirkpatrick Sharpe's letters, and am deeply sympathetic as I see his teeth dropping away one by one,—and no help for it,—till finally the poor fellow's mouth contains but an unpicturesque dental ruin, a Stonehenge as he calls it, and he looks darkly forward, without resignation, to that time when he must either 'mump or 'live by suction.' This reconciles me to modern improvements, makes me understand how much physical misery has been eliminated, and even helps me placidly to endure the announcements of that class of dental operators who innocently describe themselves as painless.

He reads these letters best, I take it, who reads them in order to reconstruct that past which is always interesting simply because it no longer exists; and because when it did exist, it was, to the human ephemera who beheld it, the Present, tremendously modern, even marvellous in their eyes.

The reader must throw his mind back into such decades of that past as interest him most. He may legitimately seize on anything that will help to fill out his conception. Let him try to apprehend what life was, minus this or the other material

advantage. Let him subtract the ruling interest of to-day, and put in its place the ruling interest of yesterday. He must put Paganini for Paderewski, Duc d'Enghien for Albert Dreyfus, Burke and Hare for the Whitechapel murderer. He must substitute *The Heart of Midlothian* for (Heaven help us!) *The Christian*. He must imagine the time when a reference would be made to some fate-concealed Smith, and all the world would know it meant Mr. Smith in *Evelina*, whereas nowadays it would be Terence Mulvaney, or Tammas Haggart, or the Little Minister. And the reader will perchance find a clue to much worth knowing if he tries to conjure up that day when, instead of laughing, as we do, over the comic progresses of the Emperor William, people would knit the brow over the bloody progresses of Napoleon Bonaparte. By some such process as this, as far-reaching and exhaustive as his time, patience, and insight will permit, may one hope for a substantial reward from reading the letters of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe and his friends.

YOUNG DISRAELI was not altogether a success in the rôle of dandy. He lacked self-restraint. Everybody recalls Fascination Fledgeby's remark to Mrs. Alfred Lammle, at the dinner given in honor of Miss Podsnap. Learning that his hostess has just been for a drive the brilliant Fledgeby says, 'Some people are accustomed 'to take long drives; but it generally appears to 'me that if they make 'em too long, they overdo 'it.' Disraeli, unlike Brummell and D'Orsay, made his drives too long.

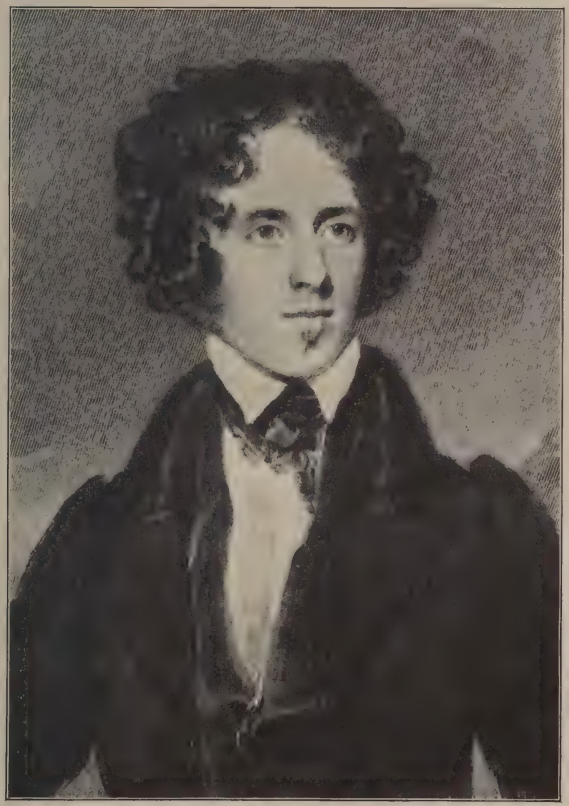
The bystanders, however, profited thereby and were vastly entertained. They had every reason to be grateful to the young man for the spirit with which he played the part he had undertaken. He both over-dressed and over-acted it, but that only made the spectacle the more amusing. Disraeli's assurance was infinite. There was little disposition on the part of the audience to pity the amazing actor, for no one could be quite certain that the

youth was not deliberately making game of the spectators. It was barely possible that they were the fool, not he.

The stories of Disraeli's sartorial magnificence invited a broad style of treatment. They seem incredible now. But then the public was prepared to believe anything of the author of *Vivian Grey*. No one could say of him that there was 'nothing 'remarkable' in his costume, still less that it was distinguished by 'a certain exquisite propriety.' He plotted to get himself talked about, and it was his habit to succeed in whatever he undertook. Dressed in a blue surtout, a pair of military light blue trousers, black stockings with red stripes, and shoes (his friend Meredith's description, this), he walked up Regent Street at a crowded hour. The populace instinctively divided to let the apparition go by.

'It was like the opening of the Red Sea,' said Disraeli, 'which I now perfectly believe from ex-'perience. Even well-dressed people stopped to look 'at me.'

We feel, as we read the account, that the fellow was shaking his sides with laughter. What an image it was, that of the Red Sea, and how characteristic of the man to make use of it! We can visualize the scene — this one self-possessed, fop-



Emery Walker, Ltd., Photo.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

'His taste inclined him naturally towards the florid in 'dress, manner, and style of writing. People used to 'laugh at him. But the shrewder wits among them 'suspected that Disraeli knew pretty well what he was 'about.'

pish, ironical Israelite going up Regent Street, between two walls of nearly petrified Gentiles! Such a young man does not need our sympathy. We need his.

Mrs. Norton (the celebrated lady whom we like to identify with Diana Warwick, of The Crossways) told Frederick Locker that she had seen Benjamin Disraeli in St. James's Street in lace ruffles, black velvet trousers, and boots with high red heels. Locker wondered whether she may not have been exaggerating; his tone as he repeats the story is rather sceptical.[1]

To Motley the historian, who quotes her description in a letter, the lady gave an even livelier account. It is worth transcribing in full. She met Disraeli for the first time at a dinner-party. 'He 'wore a black velvet coat lined with satin, purple 'trousers with a gold band running down the out-'side seam, a scarlet waistcoat, long lace ruffles 'falling down to the tips of his fingers, white 'gloves with several brilliant rings outside them, 'and long black ringlets rippling down upon his 'shoulders. It seemed impossible that such a Guy 'Fawkes could have been tolerated in any so-'ciety.' Mrs. Norton told him 'that he made a 'fool of himself by appearing in such fantastic

[1] F. Locker-Lampson: *My Confidences*, p. 311, note.

'shape, and he afterwards modified his costume, 'but he was never to be put down.'[1]

That he wore rings in the manner described has been as often denied as affirmed. It is a relief to know that a point so vital to the comfort of the reader no longer remains in a state of tantalizing obscurity. We know the worst. 'One ques-'tion which Mankind has never determined,' says Sir William Fraser, 'I can now settle. On the evi-'dence of Sir Thomas Henry, Disraeli did wear 'rings outside his gloves; and so appeared on this 'occasion,' to wit, when he was brought into court for having libelled Austin, Q.C. This happened in 1838, when the novelist was no longer open to the accusation of being a youth.[2]

A few more details come to us through an American who combined the pursuits of dandy and man of letters with some success. N. P. Willis saw Disraeli at Lady Blessington's, sitting in the deep window that looked out into Hyde Park, 'with the last rays of daylight reflected from the 'gorgeous gold flowers of a splendidly embroid-'ered waistcoat.' He wore a quantity of chains about his neck and pockets, and carried a black stick with a white cord and tassel. D'Orsay was

[1] Motley: *Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 264.
[2] Fraser: *Disraeli and his Day*, p. 229.

also present, and the American noted his superiority to the other dandies in the quality they professed. The Frenchman 'seemed showily dressed 'till you looked to particulars, and then it seemed 'only a simple thing well fitted to a very magni-'ficent person.'

The best part of Willis's sketch is that which follows; the 'Penciller's' vignettes are often masterly.

'Disraeli has one of the most remarkable faces 'I ever saw. He is lividly pale, and but for the 'energy of his action and the strength of his lungs, 'would seem a victim to consumption. His eye 'is as black as Erebus, and has the most mock-'ing and lying-in-wait sort of expression conceiv-'able. His mouth is alive with a kind of impa-'tient nervousness, and when he has burst forth 'with a particularly successful cataract of expres-'sion, it assumes a curl of scorn that would be 'worthy of Mephistopheles. His hair is as extra-'ordinary as his taste in waistcoats. A thick heavy 'mass of jet black ringlets falls over his left cheek 'almost to his collarless stock, while on the right 'it is parted and put away with the smooth care-'fulness of a girl's. . . .'

Disraeli talked a good deal on that occasion, and Willis says that one 'might as well attempt to

'gather up the foam of the sea' as try to convey an idea of the language he used. In a word, the man was far more remarkable than the dandy. This singular person was a noteworthy figure without the superficial embellishment of purple trousers, lace ruffles, and a black cane with a white tassel.

Here is a sketch of later date and by another hand, yet embodying the same idea. Frederick Locker saw Disraeli once and never forgot him, though he did not at the time know who it was. The future author of *London Lyrics*, then a youth of eighteen, was making a flying trip to Boulogne in company with his sister Elizabeth. The only aft-passengers besides themselves were a gentleman and lady. The gentleman seemed to young Locker rather old and very odd, the lady much older and very common-looking; 'he was dressed and 'adorned in the fashion of the Bond Street of that 'day — a tall hat, a queerly cut coat, and trousers 'that fitted over his boots like gaiters. His dress 'was highly peculiar, his air and manner still more 'so. He riveted my attention; I could not keep 'my eyes off him. He did not talk much, but 'stood and sat in a highly uncomfortable, shrug-'shouldered, shivery, and exhausted manner.'

Years afterward, when Disraeli was pointed out

to him, Locker recognized his steamer companion. It then occurred to him that he must have seen Mr. and Mrs. Disraeli on their wedding-journey; for the year of their marriage (1839) was the year in which he made the flying trip to Boulogne with his sister Elizabeth. But it was the man Disraeli who had riveted Locker's attention that first time, and made it 'impossible' for the youth to keep his eyes off him; the 'queer' Bond Street costume was a mere detail in the general effect.

If Disraeli amused the London social world of 1826 by his audacities of dress and speech, he astonished that world by his novel *Vivian Grey*. One can see why the book should have vastly entertained its own generation. Some courage is needed to get through it now. The book is of a pitiless length, nearly five hundred closely printed pages in the Hughenden edition. So much idle talk is rarely to be found between the covers of a volume. Words, words, words, and then more words yet! The author himself knew that half of it was idle talk, and, I firmly believe, took an impish delight in deluging the reader in tidal waves of exuberant verbosity.

Stevenson thought that literature might after all be only a morbid secretion. In which case it

were a good thing to be rid of it. The twenty-one-year-old Disraeli had to get *Vivian Grey* out of his system, and he did it most effectively. The novel appeared in five volumes in the original edition of 1826–27.

As for the persons of the drama hardly one can be said really 'to live.' On the other hand, there is a thoroughly alive character back of the book, namely, the author. Such grimaces and contortions, such twirlings on one toe, such harlequin-like leaping and bounding one is not often permitted to see. Few active novels give the reader so strong an impression of their having been the outcome of violent mental gymnastics.

Vivian Grey is the story of a young English adventurer who, unsupported by great wealth or the prestige of an ancient name, sets out to make himself a force in the game of politics by means of his wit and an intuitive knowledge of human weakness. He is good-looking, graceful, adroit, impudent when impudence will serve his purpose, and he has a seductive tongue. His chief weapon is flattery. Society welcomes him because it can depend on hearing from him what it likes best to hear. His motives are not ignoble throughout, albeit his ambition is to handle men as a chess-player handles rooks and pawns.

A prominent character in the novel is the Marquess of Carabas, a rich, vain, slow-witted peer, very greedy for power, who has fallen behind in the political race. Vivian attaches himself to the nobleman, points out with affected diffidence a line of conduct which may be pursued for recovering the lost ground, becomes the peer's agent in bringing together other disaffected gentlemen, and, in short, organizes the Carabas party. The young adventurer, it will be seen, aspires to be the brains of the new movement. He knows that he cannot be 'king,' he is sure that his talents are of the sort which will raise him to the position of 'king-maker' at least.

The scene of the drama is now transferred from London to Château Desir, the magnificent seat of the Marquess of Carabas. The novelist loved to describe the English country mansion, or castle, with its sumptuous appointments. Every one recalls pages of the sort in *Tancred*, *Sybil*, *Lothair*, and *Coningsby*. The picture of Château Desir is the first of his efforts in this line.

All the disaffected men whose influence is worth having are brought together against the moment when the great idea shall be unfolded. With them come the wives and the daughters, together with a host of other visitors, mere walking ladies and

gentlemen who impart liveliness to the pageant but who have nothing to do with the movement of the story. Disraeli is thought to be a flatterer of the aristocratic world. He did not begin by taking that attitude; a stranger herd of human cattle than those he has collected at the Château Desir one has seldom seen. All are more or less absurd, from Lord Alhambra and Sir Plantagenet Pure to Mr. Metternich Scribe, and from the Marchioness of Carabas and Mrs. Million to Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

The attacks are not limited to the upper classes. This gay young novelist runs amuck through his world, armed with a fool's bladder with which he whacks people over the sconce, to their considerable annoyance. Philosophers, political economists, men of letters, editors of reviews, and scientific enthusiasts are all satirized with a free hand. The characterizations often lack wit, they never lack vivacity. Episodes of the most farcical sort are introduced, as when Mr. Mackaw's pet cassowary breaks loose from its keeper, stalks into the breakfast-room and jumps on the table. Live cassowaries at the morning meal of the family are an infrequent phenomenon even in English homes. The fun is mechanical, the product of sheer animal spirits. The chapter will not stand comparison

with a piece of genuinely comic writing, like the episode of the monkey, in *Evelina*.

At a solemn meeting of the politicians Vivian Grey, as spokesman for the Marquess of Carabas, expounds the new political scheme. In casting about for a leader it is discovered that no one is available but a certain Frederick Cleveland, now self-exiled to North Wales and out of conceit with public life because of his betrayal on a well-known occasion by the Marquess himself. Vivian's mission is to reconcile Cleveland with his old enemy. Being a consummate diplomatist the youth accomplishes his task with an ease that is almost annoying to the reader.

The political coach is upset in mid-career by the extraordinary Mrs. Felix Lorraine (sister-in-law to the Marquess), who is angered by Vivian's having discovered the nature of her relations to Cleveland in former years; the (presumably) improper pair had met in Germany during Cleveland's student days. The lady is so good as to try to poison Vivian. 'Here, drink, drink while it is 'effervescent,' she cries giving him a glass of hock and seltzer. But Vivian will not drink. He prefers to retire to his room and utter a series of exclamatory remarks ending with, 'Oh, God! the system 'of my existence seems to stop: I cannot breathe.'

Having failed in this attempt, Mrs. Lorraine undermines his position of confidential man to the Marquess. Grey finds his influence waning; then the supporters of the movement fall away; and lastly the Marquess is deprived by the Crown of the only ornamental office he fills. The author says that he will not affect to give any description of the nobleman's conduct at this juncture. 'He 'raved! he stamped! he blasphemed!' A little later comes a dramatic climax in the shape of a duel. Vivian kills Cleveland, though he had no intention of doing so. He had already told Mrs. Felix Lorraine something that made her shriek and burst a blood-vessel. But that was not surprising; he had meant to be severe with the lady.

Prostrated by remorse and overwork, Vivian has a long and dangerous illness. When he recovers to a degree that will admit of his travelling he goes abroad. With a picture of the hero in retirement at Heidelberg, wandering at break of day among the wild passes of the Bergstrasse, or climbing the lofty ridges, or sailing by night upon the 'star-lit Neckar,' the novelist brings the first part of his story to a close.

In *Vivian Grey* the author began the practice of portraying men and women who were well known in social and political life. This is a novel with a

'key,' a book of the sort described by the author of *The Golden Bowl* as detestable. Disraeli enjoyed making use of the device. Few of his writings are entirely free from it. He put himself into his novels, he complimented his friends and pilloried his enemies. Half the gusto with which contemporaries read him came from the possibility of identifying the dramatis personæ with prominent figures in London life. The novelist always made a show of dressing up the character, as if to prevent its being recognized. But the disguise was of the theatrical variety — so fashioned that everyone in the audience might be able instantly to identify the wearer.

Believing that he made all his studies from living models the public has shown a childlike eagerness to trace the originals of every character. Handbooks have been compiled which aim to tell us exactly who 's who in the entire series of novels. The reader will be none the worse off for taking a somewhat sceptical attitude on the question of such wholesale identifications. Because Disraeli often helped himself to one of a man's features it does not follow that all the remaining features went with the one.

In the portion of the work relating to English life the author is at his best in what is sometimes called 'patter,' — smart, rapid-fire comments on all

sorts of people, as in the dialogue between Grey and Cleveland in their walk from the Horse Guards to Piccadilly Gate, or in the scene at the Château when Vivian coruscates for the amusement of Julia Manvers, or in the chapter of letters describing what the guests did with themselves after the breaking up of the house-party.

The first four 'books' — a vivacious account of the hero's childhood, education, and his futile excursion into English politics — form a complete novel. Had he ended the narrative with Cleveland's death and the picture of Vivian in retirement at Heidelberg the author would not have done amiss. The second and third parts of the romance have no connection with the first. Why, then, did young Mr. Disraeli give himself the trouble of writing them?

For two distinct reasons, as it seems to me. Publishers of that day preferred to bring out novels in three large-print volumes, and readers felt that they were not getting the worth of their money if they had less than three. The Carabas business furnished matter enough for two volumes of the original edition but no more. Custom alone explains the existence of the third and quite unrelated volume, the one ending with the account of Violet Fane's death.

But Disraeli had his own reason for prolonging a tale that was already told. He had recently made a tour of the Rhine country and was brimming over with obvious thoughts that needed a vent. He was at the 'poetical' age, and he loved to spin ornate prose quite as much as he loved making caustic epigrams on society. It was a joy to him to compose apostrophes to rivers, mountains, forests, and even to the moon. He was an adept at the construction of long sentences beginning 'Oh, thou!' and ending with an exclamation point. In the German part of the story he gives the rein to his passion for this sort of thing.

After a year's rest at Heidelberg, Vivian Grey again becomes a figure in the world. He is seen at Frankfort, at Coblentz, at Ems, and elsewhere. A fantastic and grateful conjuror, one Essper George, in return for a trifling service, insists on becoming the hero's worshipful attendant. He it is who reveals to Vivian the sad fact that the young man's bosom friend, Baron De Konigstein, is a card-sharper, though capable of better things. This gifted youth has the art of speaking to bad men in a way that makes them bury their faces in their hands and sob aloud. Other bad men he propels through long corridors into the

street; the impetus they have acquired at his hands is sufficient to carry them into the next town.

At Ems young Grey distinguishes himself by 'breaking the bank' and by falling in love with a beautiful English girl, Miss Violet Fane, who is so inconsiderate as to die of heart failure at the very moment when Vivian is pouring out the tale of his adoration. 'He shrieks and falls on her lifeless 'body'—a proceeding quite according to rule in 1826. With this shriek the novel again comes to an abrupt end. The third volume has its due allotment of 'comics.' It is permitted the reader to smile, if he will, at the rich British tourist as personified in the Fitzloom family, and to be diverted by the playfulness of the young gentlemen from 'Christchurch.'

In another pair of volumes Disraeli recounted the further adventures of his hero. The curtain rises on a new scene, and practically all the characters are new. Vivian and his man, Essper George, continue their travels in Germany. They have experiences of a farcical sort at a drinking-bout presided over by the Grand Duke of Schoss Johannisberger. In the forest they meet a hunting-party. Vivian, who can turn his hand to anything and has an intuitive knowledge of the best way

to kill a wild boar,[1] saves the life of the Prince of Little Lilliput, goes home with him to his castle of Turriparva, becomes his confidant, learns the meaning of the word 'mediatised,' and is drawn into schemes for the aggrandisement of the vest-pocket Principality. 'Am I fated always to be the 'dry nurse of an embryo faction!' thinks Vivian to himself. He is fated by his calm and superior manner to throw the wily politician, Beckendorf, into a state of perplexity. The diplomatic antics of that master-mind would be more amusing if they were less circumstantially set forth. But Disraeli wrote to please himself, as when he makes Sievers, librarian to the Prince of Little Lilliput, reply to a simple question in a speech of over nineteen hundred words.

From Turriparva the adventurer goes to the city of Reisenburg, meets everybody of distinction, finds himself a favorite at the court of the Grand Duke, and has some love-passages with an independent young Baroness who is a guest there. 'Sybilla, dearest Sybilla! say you are mine!' cries Vivian. The young lady would like to be his, at all events she gives her adorer that impression; but besides being of high rank and royal lineage

[1] One must not be unjust; Vivian 'became extemely addicted to field 'sports' at Heidelberg.

she is betrothed to the Crown Prince of Reisenburg (without having first seen him), and has come in the humble disguise of a Baroness to have a good look at her future husband. The fact of the clandestine love-making is discovered. There are scenes. Vivian is instructed to put twenty miles between himself and Reisenburg before sunset. He departs in state. Everything is made easy for him, he is an Englishman and a youth of splendid intellectual endowments. But he simply must not flirt with an Archduchess of the house of Austria, an engaged girl, even with her coöperation.

Disraeli's object in writing these pages, one may conclude, is to describe half in jest and half in earnest the life of petty German courts and capitals, as well as to indulge his fancy for writing 'poetical' prose. The scenes at Turriparva and Reisenburg weary the reader by their endless detail. Yet one is not sorry after all for having gone to Madame Carolina's soirée; nor does he regret having made the acquaintance of Emilius von Aslingen the dandy, or having heard an exposition of the theories of Von Chronicle the historical novelist. Among the paragraphs that cling to the memory is Sievers's account of the standing army of Reisenburg with its forty general officers,

'being one to every two hundred privates.' The military manœuvres and the mock battle are treated in Disraeli's best (that is to say, his most ironical) style. The affair was exceedingly brilliant, though at first 'it was rather difficult to 'distinguish between the army and the staff.'

The novel has no ending in the artistic sense, it simply stops. Vivian and his man are travelling towards Vienna. A terrific thunder-storm comes up. The horse Vivian is riding snorts wildly (as is the habit of horses in novels), dashes down a hill, rears on its hind legs, flings its master, and then falls dead in a most melodramatic manner. Vivian is not killed, though he must have been terribly stunned. At this point the novelist bids us an affectionate adieu. He laments that he is not permitted to detail the singular adventures that befell Vivian Grey in Vienna, 'but his history has ex-'panded under my pen,' — as it most certainly had.

A romance constructed after the fashion of this one has no 'logical' ending, and might go on forever. As it now stands the novel called *Vivian Grey* consists of three distinct stories no one of which is related to the others. They have a common hero, otherwise each is independent. We have first Vivian in England; then Vivian at Ems, with his friendships and his love-making; and

finally Vivian at Reisenburg, with the Beckendorf political episode, and the affair of the pretty Austrian Archduchess. The first and last parts might stand alone; the second is lucky in being propped up between the other two. Why was the hero not killed by the fall from his horse? Did the author cherish the fond hope that there might be an imperative demand for two more volumes? If so he would naturally be careful about throwing away a life as precious as Vivian Grey's.

We are told that Disraeli's family did not like the novel, and that he himself began presently to be ashamed of it. But not so very presently, for in 1833 he was writing his sister in an exultant tone that Mrs. Blackwood (one of the Richard Brinsley Sheridans) 'knows all my works by heart, 'and spouts whole pages of "V. G."' and the other books. On the other hand, in a General Preface of 1853, Disraeli declared that for twenty-five years he had declined to reprint *Vivian Grey*, and that he only consented now to include it among his collected works because 'the action 'of the foreign presses, especially in America and 'Germany,' made it impossible to do otherwise. On us then falls a part of the responsibility of having kept the absurd, shapeless, yet spirited romance alive. Would we have been as loyal

under the restrictions of an International Copyright Law?

To the 'dandiacal' period of Disraeli's career belongs at least one other novel, possibly more than one. *The Young Duke* (1831) is not merely a better story in all ways than *Vivian Grey*, but a story worth any reader's while. Among its virtues is that of being a hundred and fifty pages shorter than its forerunner. The characters have more than a semblance of life, the plot is engrossing, and the intended clevernesses are really clever. The book should commend itself to those who want novels that are 'good for them,' in that it gives a vivid and presumably accurate picture of English society at the time when Catholic emancipation was the absorbing topic of the day. Scenes of dramatic intensity and vigor abound, such as the remarkable gambling episode in the fourth 'book,' when the spendthrifts played until not a man among them (with the exception of Tom Cogit) could have told what town he lived in, and Lord Castlefort lost one of his false teeth, and the young Duke lost one hundred thousand pounds. Also the love-making is endurable, though one must not come to these passages fresh from a reading of the chapter entitled 'By Wilming Weir,' in *Sandra Belloni*.

To enjoy Disraeli one should, I suppose, take a 'course' of his novels, or at least read him 'in 'connection with the literature of his times.' Leslie Stephen actually wished 'that Disraeli could 'have stuck to his novels instead of rising to be 'Prime Minister of England.' Frederic Harrison, who pronounces *Vivian Grey* 'a lump of im-'pudence,' *The Young Duke* 'a lump of affecta-'tion,' and *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* 'ambitious 'balderdash,' has little but praise for *Popanilla*, *Ixion in Heaven*, and *The Infernal Marriage*. The other writings of the novelist's first period — *Contarini Fleming*, *Henrietta Temple*, and *Venetia* — seem to have given both these able critics genuine pleasure. Other good men have not been so friendly. Anthony Trollope grows red in the face over one of Disraeli's later books — it is the 'very bathos of story-telling,' the very worst of a fairly long series of 'bad novels.' But what right had Anthony Trollope to be reading Disraeli?

THE 'ADVENTURES OF A GENTLEMAN'

(BULWER-LYTTON)

EW volumes of anecdotes are more entertaining than *Hic et Ubique*, by Sir William Fraser, Baronet, the author of *Words on Wellington* and *Disraeli and his Day*. Now and then he drops the anecdotal form and groups his stories and reminiscences so that they make a little essay. For example, his account of King Louis Philippe at Eton fills only a page, and the tale of the Duchess of Somerset's witty reply to the linen-draper but seven lines; when, however, he comes to Bulwer-Lytton he finds twenty pages none too many for what he has to say of that extraordinary man.

The Baronet ('Sir William Fraser was a baro-'net who thought well of his order,' says Augustine Birrell) paid his first visit to Knebworth when he was a young man. The honor seemed to him a very great one, for Bulwer-Lytton 'was seldom 'known to ask any young man into his house.'

He breakfasted with the novelist under a tent in the garden. The talk must have been amusing if one may judge by the specimens he gives. All this part of the book is written in a way to make one wish that there were more of it.

One or two remarkable stories (inventions of Lady Bulwer) are repeated by the anecdotist for the purpose of proving that they could not have happened. The device is ingenious. The reader's innate love of scandal is gratified at the moment a strong appeal is being made to his love of justice. He is glad to learn exactly what it was that was not true.

When Sir William Fraser saw Bulwer-Lytton for the first time he was so astonished at his appearance that he must needs dream about him the following night. In his dream he asked the phantom whether it really thought that *Pelham* was its best book, and it replied, "On the whole I do." Somewhere I have read that the flesh-and-blood Bulwer held the same opinion as the phantom. He had reason to be grateful to a work which not only caught and held the attention of novel-readers, but also brought him money. Colburn paid him five hundred pounds for *Pelham*, and later, 'according to one account,' the sum was doubled. It is clear that he recognised the value of the title

Emery Walker, Ltd., Photo.

BULWER-LYTTON

Being rather young and wholly unterrified, Bulwer had no hesitancy in flicking at whatever came his way. He liked to think that he was a bitter satirist, but he was too full of spirit, too much in love with life for that rôle. Society can hardly have been other than amused at his attacks.

as a means of identification; for years together Bulwer was content to be known as 'The author 'of *Pelham*.'

The book was published in June, 1828. It is what was then called a 'fashionable' novel, one of the sort that Professor Teufelsdröckh essayed to read, and *did* read, until the medical adviser forbade it, fearing that it might bring ruin to the great scholar's intellectual and bodily faculties. Coming along so soon after young Disraeli's first novel, *Pelham* has the air of a rival. Possibly Bulwer meant to beat his friend in his own field. There are points of resemblance between the novels, and each is a marvel of vivacity. Bulwer mastered the mechanics of his art at the very beginning. But then he had had some preliminary practice; *Falkland* preceded *Pelham*.

Politics figure in the story, though *Pelham* is not a political novel in the sense that *Vivian Grey* (the first part) may be so described. With Disraeli's hero politics are the main thing in life. Bulwer's novel recounts the adventures of a gentleman, and among those adventures an excursion into the political arena. Henry Pelham wins an election as representative for Buyemall, but is almost immediately unseated. The unsuccessful opponent 'preferred a charge against me, for what

'he called undue means. Heaven knows what he 'meant. . . .'

The young man has no inclination to join a third party, and refuses the invitation of his friend Lord Vincent to make one of a set of new patriots. He becomes Lord Dawton's factotum — if one may use so mean a word for so lofty an office as that filled by Henry Pelham. The adviser to the Marquess of Carabas makes his way by virtue of being a glib talker. Pelham is a student of the science of politics. The reader cannot quite make out when he got the time to master his knowledge, but these sudden acquisitions of mental wealth are to be looked for in novels and plays. Pelham used to rise by yellow candle-light, like the child in the poem, and spend in intense application 'the hours which every other member of 'our party wasted in enervating slumbers.' What he calls 'hesternal dissipation' had a bad effect on his colleagues. Even this show of industry is not enough to account for the young man's stock of wisdom. He admits that he had filled Lord Dawton with an exaggerated idea of his abilities, and that he knew how to sustain it. In a word, he was something of a charlatan, though not after the manner of Vivian Grey, whose reading was enormous, but who did not even make a pretence

of using what he is supposed to have acquired from books on statecraft.

Pelham supplies the political economy for his faction, their knowledge of the science being deplorably scant. When some period in the constitution needs to be investigated, he acts as 'ex-'positor.' If Lord Dawton cannot find time to complete a pamphlet, it is Pelham who begs permission to throw his chief's observations into form, to make 'Sibylline leaves into a book.' The pamphlet takes prodigiously, 'though there were 'many errors in style,' and its authorship is attributed to one of the ablest members of the Opposition.

The youth has other gifts besides those of reading and writing. For example, he rounds up the younger members (not his phrase, by the way) when their presence is needed in the House. A man of fashion himself, Pelham is able to call the dandies to arms; for his sake (not Honor's) they will consent to be separated temporarily from their partners of the ball-room, or dragged away from the gaming-table. He also undertakes to secure for his party the four votes controlled by Lord Guloseton, a mission less important than that of Vivian Grey to Frederick Cleveland, yet involving an exercise of the same kind of talents.

The account of the dinner given by the epicurean peer to the young diplomat makes very pleasant reading. Guloseton is said to be a caricature of Lord Alvanley, whose dinners had the reputation of being perfect, the best in London.

Bulwer could never resist the temptation to be philosophical—in manner if not in substance. After the satirical account of Pelham's successful canvass for the votes of Buyemall, the author writes a chapter on the value of political education. It is cast in the form of a dialogue between the new member and his uncle, Lord Glenmorris. This excellent man urges his nephew to read a little; the youth has great talents, but if he is to shine in Parliament those talents must be cultivated. Pelham is quite willing to read, and says to his uncle, 'Suppose I begin with Walter Scott's novels; I am told they are extremely interesting.'

The uncle has other ideas. 'You see this very small pamphlet; it is a paper by Mr. Mill, upon Government. We will know this thoroughly, and when we have done so, we may rest assured that we have a far more accurate information upon the head and front of all political knowledge, than two-thirds of the young men whose cultivation of mind you have usually heard panegyrised.'

Pelham goes to work with the docility becoming the nephew of a rich uncle. He reads all of Mill's articles in the Encyclopædia, 'the more 'popular works of Bentham,' and then, as he expresses it, plunges into the recesses of political economy. His delight in these studies is so great that he can hardly tear himself from them, or at least so he says. When, however, his mother, Lady Frances, suggests that he must be getting very much bored, that he is quite clever enough to trust to his own abilities ('Your great gen-'iuses never read') the youth gives an unequivocal yawn, deposits Mr. Bentham on 'Popular Falla-'cies' on the table, and sets off for fashionable Cheltenham.

In spite of the frivolous turn given to the episode, one can see that the novelist is perfectly sincere in penning the chapter of advice to fledgling statesmen. Pelham was certainly none the worse off for his studies, even if he was not all that Lord Lytton's biographer finds him to be — 'a dandy, indeed, with some of the veneer of 'puppydom which was the mode, . . . but, with 'all his affectations, a true-bred, earnest-minded 'Englishman, able to master any subject he might 'take up, in and out of Parliament.' This same critic explains why Pelham became at once 'and

'still remains a French favorite.' It is due not to the young man's shrewd cosmopolitanism and Parisian polish, but rather to a union of these traits with 'his essentially British perseverance, 'thoroughness, and pluck.'[1]

Two narratives are combined in the novel of *Pelham*. Though distinct they are closely related. Each serves as a foil to the other. In the first place there is Henry Pelham's own story, told by himself; it is a joyous autobiography, frankly egoistic, highly sophisticated in tone. One learns how and where this wordly young man was educated, the circumstances of his introduction into society, the history of his gay career in Paris, the motives that brought him back to England and led to his entering political life, and also, how he fell in love with Ellen Glanville, the 'peerless 'heroine' of the novel, and won her, together with a *dot* of forty thousand pounds.

All the lighter parts of the history, the sketches of the gay world, the satirical portraits, the bantering talk, the youthful cynicism, and the atmosphere of modishness, are conveyed to the reader through the medium of Pelham himself. He it is who revolutionizes taste in the grave matter of

[1] T. H. S. Escott: *Edward Bulwer, first Baron Lytton of Knebworth. A Social, Personal, and Political Monograph.* London, 1910.

men's dress. Bulwer was not content to make his dandy a mere copyist, a brilliant exponent of the prevailing style; he must be an originator.

Side by side with Pelham's narrative runs that of his old Eton school-friend, Reginald Glanville (now Sir Reginald), he of 'the bright locks and 'the lofty brow.' All the gloom and the mystery that pervade the book fall to his part. He is the tragic figure, a noble, gifted, rich, but profoundly unhappy man. Some terrible sorrow crushes him. Neither Pelham nor the reader is able to make out what it is. That Glanville has lost his lady-love would seem to be the explanation. The gloomy hero was once found by Pelham weeping over a grave in an obscure Norfolk church-yard; the encounter led to melodramatic talk and posing. One sympathizes with the grief-stricken gentleman, and wishes that he had a more natural way of expressing himself.

Pelham afterwards finds Glanville in Paris (disguised as Warburton), associating with men of shady reputation, a certain dissipated John Tyrrell, heir to a baronetcy, and Thornton, who lives by his own wits and the innocence of English travellers. It becomes clear that John Tyrrell is responsible for Glanville's misery, that he has done him a great wrong and is to be punished

therefor. The scene of the story is now changed to London and other places in England, but the relations between the two men are of the same bitterly hostile nature. In brief, all that part of the novel which holds the reader in suspense, and makes him wonder 'how it is going to turn out,' may be referred to a crime, the peculiar atrocity of which is known only to Reginald Glanville and John Tyrrell.

The mystery is revealed in the last quarter of the book and proves to be sufficiently painful; Bulwer liked to harrow the reader's soul and play upon his nerves. Tyrrell is murdered as he is returning from the races at Newmarket; he had two thousand pounds on his person. The crime is laid at the door of Sir Reginald Glanville, whose hatred of the dead man was notorious. Whereupon Henry Pelham, the dandy, becomes an amateur detective and ferrets out the real murderer. For a time he had believed the friend he adored guilty, but a great light breaks in upon him when he hears Glanville's story. He discovers the hiding-place of the wretched man who saw the crime, and through his means secures the conviction of Thornton, the actual villain. Pelham has that masterly command of technique which distinguishes the amateur from the profes-

sional detective. But on the whole one prefers the company of Inspector Bucket.

For a novel written in praise of Almack's, St. James's Street, and dandyism generally, *Pelham* contains a rather surprising number of scenes from low life. Bulwer undoubtedly liked this sort of thing, was pleased to show his versatility by alternating classical quotations with thieves' slang, enjoyed setting over against his curled and perfumed exquisites such unsavory characters as Job Jonson and Brimstone Bess. Of his people from the underworld one, at least, is studied from life. The eccentric of the gin-shop who mingled oaths, slang, and tags of Latin was Jemmy Gordon, a Cambridge barber; the name under which he figures in the novel is the one he bore in real life. And lest it should be thought that the sketch of the protean pickpocket is exaggerated, Bulwer refers the reader to the *Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux*. In his way Job Jonson is not so bad, but the way of Mr. Dawkins, popularly known as the Artful Dodger, is more to our taste.

The portrait of Brummell as Russelton is a slovenly bit of work, but no doubt answered its purpose. Prince Pückler-Muskau saw the ex-dandy just about the time that *Pelham* was published: 'Though depressed by his present situation he

'showed a considerable fund of good humour and 'good-nature. His air was that of good society, 'simple and natural, and marked by more urban-'ity than the dandies of the present race are capa-'ble of.' Even a man of fashion should have his due. The German traveller gives us the portrait of a gentleman, the novelist that of a clown.

It is easy to see why *Pelham* succeeded. The earlier chapters are light, vivacious, and impudent. When read aloud they seem actually brilliant, like the dialogue of a clever play. The wit is good so long as one does not dwell on it, but to turn back and read a chapter a second time is fatal. Only by a rapid perusal, it seems to me, will one get the effect the author aimed to produce.

Being rather young and wholly unterrified, Bulwer had no hesitancy in flicking at whatever came his way. He liked to think that he was a bitter satirist, but he was too full of spirit, too much in love with life for that rôle. Society can hardly have been other than amused at his attacks. Byron had a small but choice collection of challenges awaiting him on his return to England, one result of the publication of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Bulwer was not called out, so far as we know; and the lady, if there was one, who

closed her doors to him after reading her history in the pages of *Pelham*, has yet to be identified. Nevertheless he was quite convinced that he had been very savage. He wrote to his friend Mrs. Cunningham, 'I have no more spared my French 'than my London acquaintances.'

People liked the smart phrasing. Take, for an example, Pelham's description of the Duchesse de Perpignan, who could be excessively enamoured of 'an oyster pâté and Lord Byron's "Corsair,"' but of nothing else. 'In her amours she was 'Lucretia herself; in her epicurism Apicius would 'have yielded to her. She was pleased with sighs, 'but she adored suppers. She would leave every-'thing for her lover, except her dinner.' Or this on confirmed punsters. 'No action, to that race 'in general, is so serious an occupation as the play 'upon words; and the remorseless habit of mur-'dering a phrase, renders them perfectly obdurate 'to the simple death of a friend.' And again this paragraph on the world's attitude towards the world. 'For a coxcomb there is no mercy — for 'a coquette no pardon. They are, as it were, the 'dissenters of society — no crime is too bad to be 'imputed to them; they do not believe the reli-'gion of others — they set up a deity of their own 'vanity — all the orthodox vanities of others are

'offended. Then comes the bigotry — the stake '— the *auto-da-fé* of scandal.'

Many a facile writer is capable of phrases like these. But could he manufacture them by the gross; and having done that, perform the exceedingly difficult feat of persuading the public to read them? All the world, as the French say, read young Mr. Bulwer's book.

His devil-may-care tone was sure to pass for cleverness with a part of his audience. Handsome Seymour Conway had just caused two divorces, 'and of course all the women in London were 'dying for him.' Lady Frances has agreed to elope with Conway, but is so foolish as to return to the house for her jewels or her French dog, and meets her husband on the stairs; the servants had aroused him. He was horribly disappointed. Seymour Conway was rich and the damages would have been high. 'Those confounded servants are always in 'the way!'

This is the key in which a deal of the book is written. And the author maintains it, even when he comes to treat of matters of moment on which he has thought with no little earnestness. The effect produced is exceedingly droll at times. Sensible ideas dressed up in the most flippant of 'so-'ciety' phrases contributed to make the novel

popular. Readers who feared that Pelham was a sad dog, had a sense of relief when they came upon these passages; the story was unquestionably moral; they were permitted to read on with a feeling of perfect security.

According to Bulwer's biographer the novel of *Pelham* had a great effect in the drawing-rooms in two ways, one touching life as it is affected by literature, the other touching men's dress. 'Pel-'hamism cast out Byronism.' And it appears that the ladies were especially grateful to the novelist 'for having rid them of a nuisance.' A select few showed their gratitude by giving Bulwer a splendid dressing-case, 'with a variety of hand looking-'glasses.' There is much to gratify one's sense of the comic in the idea of casting out a malign influence by the aid of a book, and being rewarded with mirrors. The biographer himself becomes a thought less grave when he mentions the dressing-case.

In the second place '*Pelham* caused the black 'swallow-tail coat to become compulsory for even-'ing wear.' Some such change was bound to come about sooner or later. Byronism would have disappeared in time, and what with the influence of the 'Crop Club' at the close of the eighteenth century, and the growth of the democratic spirit,

the radiance must soon have faded out of the masculine costume. *Pelham* may have hastened the revolution. In these sable-suited days one comfort is left us — the black 'swallow-tail' is cheap, and its power of endurance almost beyond belief.

A SUCCESSFUL BACHELOR

(HENRY CRABB ROBINSON)

I

EW books are quite as amusing as the volumes which profess to give advice on how to live peacefully with one's wife or one's husband. Marriage is accounted a serious matter, but advice about marriage is sure to be humorous. Swift, Fielding, and Sterne are good to read, but one cannot read them always; their humor is too robust and virile, they are at times almost painfully intellectual. It is a relief to turn from *Tom Jones* and *Tristram Shandy* to those masterpieces of unconscious humor which set forth with the exactness of a newly painted guide-post the order of his going who wishes to achieve happiness in the married state. The contented man laughs as he reads such books, because he knows how independent is his own marital felicity of small rules and infinitesimal plottings. The man who is unhappily married laughs, too; in a way,

however, which may mean that he wishes the author of the book had *his* wife to contend with.

For these Guides to a Prosperous Domestic Career are written by men,—a fact which needs interpretation. Men have always shown a pathetic courage in grappling with such high themes. From John Lyly, who maintained that wives should be subdued with kindness, and Jeremy Taylor, who took the advanced and perilous position that a husband ought not to beat his wife, down to the latest theorizer who imagines that his placid domestic state is of his own shaping, and who does not perceive how adroitly he is managed by the feminine element of his household, men, and only men, have had the desperate courage to explain to the married world what it must do to be content. And these bold spirits have had their financial reward. There are many roads to fame, but this way fortune lies. If you would be noted,—or, quite as likely, notorious,—write a novel. If you would have your human document in the magazines, and your opinions on subjects about which you know nothing set forth in the Sunday newspapers, write a novel. But if you would be rich, write a book which shall instruct married people how to make the best of their uncomfortable situation.

Emery Walker, Ltd., Photo.

HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

A life like his is among the most potent influences for culture. He was modest, unassuming, gentle, and strong. He was a Successful Bachelor and a good man.

On the whole, it may be conceded that this department of literature is overdone. We want books of quite another description. More interest should be taken in bachelors. Their need is greater, and their condition really deplorable. It is a misfortune to be unhappily married, but it comes near to being a disgrace not to be married at all. Marriage is a perilous undertaking, but what shall be thought of him who hesitates because it is perilous? We may not care to go to the length of affirming that bachelors are cowardly, but we must grant that they are socially nondescript. It is possible to respect a bachelor, but it is impossible to be at ease with him. Not without reason does the world speak of a married man as 'settled.' There is something final in the condition of a Benedict. You know where to find him, or at least you know where he should be found. But of a bachelor you know nothing. Bachelorhood is a normal condition up to a certain period in a man's life, and after that it is abnormal. He who elects to remain unmarried elects to become queer. It is wonderful how readily most men adapt themselves to the conditions of matrimonial existence. Almost any man can become a fairly respectable husband; but to be a successful bachelor implies unusual gifts. I once

met in the Northwest a middle-aged writer of verse who gave me four volumes of his works, 'composed, printed, and bound' by himself. He said, 'This country is crying for a national poet, 'and I want the job.' But he was mistaken. This country is crying for help in taking care of its timid bachelors, help in marrying them off; and if they will not marry, help in getting them well housed and neatly mended. And the greatest need is the book which shall instruct the bachelor how to make glad the desert regions of his solitary existence, how to fill the vacuities with which his life is perforated.

There have been successful bachelors, and among them none more successful than Henry Crabb Robinson. He died in February, 1867, at the age of ninety-two. The inscription on his tomb records the names of eight men of renown to whom he had sustained the relation of 'friend and asso-'ciate.' The eight names are Goethe, Wordsworth, Wieland, Coleridge, Flaxman, Blake, Clarkson, and Charles Lamb. The list is striking, and indicates the wide range of Crabb Robinson's sympathies. To each of these men he rendered the tribute of a hearty and discriminating admiration. His place in the world of literature and art was peculiar. He had a strong masculine regard for

men of genius because they were men of genius, but no measure of self-interest mixed with this regard. He had not the creative power himself, but he understood that power in others. He was not a mere satellite, for he held distinctly a critical attitude at times; and no commonplace moon ever thinks of passing strictures upon the central sun. We need a word to express the relation. To men of genius he gave the encouragement and stimulus of a dignified admiration based on solid reasons. To the general reading-public he was a sort of mentor; his good sense in other matters awakened confidence in the soundness of his judgment; his catholicity of taste operated to allay that prejudice which the mob always conceives against a poet who is both new and queer.

One of Crabb Robinson's qualifications for successful bachelorhood lay in the fact that he was not good-looking. I have heard men who were handsome complain about it as a positive disadvantage. Tawno Chikno did not find beauty embarrassing; he only regretted that he was not a writer, so that he might tell the world how beautiful he was. Conventional persons would hardly dare to express themselves with the naïveté which characterized the speech of this gipsy gentleman.

Robinson early learned to make the best of his physical disadvantages, and to view himself objectively with an amused interest. When he was in Weimar, in 1829, he spent five evenings with Goethe. Goethe was fond of 'portrait memorials,' and had several hundred of them. Robinson thought it an 'extreme instance' of this taste that the poet should have insisted upon having *his* portrait. It was done in crayons by 'one Schmeller,' and must have been a success, for Crabb says, 'It 'was frightfully ugly, and very like.' And when he was once complimented on the success of his portrait by Masquerier, and told that it was just the picture one would wish to have of a friend, his 'very best expression,' Robinson dryly observed, 'It need be the best to be endurable.'

Walter Bagehot, who used to figure at Crabb Robinson's famous breakfasts, expatiates on Robinson's chin,—'a chin of excessive length and 'portentous power of extension.' The old gentleman 'made very able use of the chin at a conver-'sational crisis. Just at the point of the story he 'pushed it out and then very slowly drew it in 'again, so that you always knew when to laugh.'

Miss Fenwick (Wordsworth's Miss Fenwick) pronounced Mr. Robinson downright *ugly*, and underscored the word. It seems that there was a

great variety in his ugliness, — 'a series of ugli-'ness in quick succession, one look more ugly 'than the one which preceded it, particularly 'when he is asleep. He is always asleep when he 'is not talking.' 'On which occasions little Willy 'contemplates him with great interest, and often 'inquires, "What kind of face has Mr. Robin-'son?" "A very nice face," is the constant an-'swer; then a different look comes, and another 'inquiry of "What kind of face was that?" "A '*nice face* too." What an odd idea he must have 'of nice faces!'[1]

Miss Fenwick was of the opinion that a man could not preserve kindliness and courtesy in the bachelor state unless he had something the matter with him; that is, unless he was the victim of some misfortune which kept him 'humble, grate-'ful, and loving.' 'I remember,' she says in the letter just quoted, 'making out to my own satis-'faction that old Wishaw preserved his benevo-'lence through the want of his leg, a want that 'made him feel his dependence on his fellow-'creatures.' And she concludes that 'Robinson's 'ugliness had done for him what the want of a leg 'had done for old Wishaw.'

1 Letter from Miss Fenwick to Henry Taylor, January 26, 1839.

II

If one were to take out the important episodes of Crabb Robinson's life, pack them together, suppress the dull passages and the monotonous incidents, it would seem that this man had had a brilliant career. He lived long, which gave him time to see many things; he had good health, which enabled him to enjoy what he saw. Life tasted sweet to him up to the last day, and almost to the last hour. His wholesome curiosity about good books and good people never failed. The effect of reading his *Diary* is to make one ambitious to live long; and if the book were more generally read, I am sure that longevity would be greatly on the increase among us.

Let us note a few facts which bring out the stretch of time through which his experiences lay. Many men have lived more years than he, but they have not had Robinson's gift for friendship nor Robinson's opportunities. He was born in 1775. In 1790 he heard John Wesley preach 'in 'the great round meeting-house at Colchester.' 'On each side of him stood a minister, and the 'two held him up, having their hands under his 'armpits. His feeble voice was barely audible. 'But his reverend countenance, especially his long

'white locks, formed a picture never to be for-'gotten.' Sixty-two years after this date Crabb Robinson was attending church at Brighton, listening to that gifted man the Reverend Frederick W. Robertson; and when he was told that Robertson unsettled people's minds, he replied that nobody could be awakened out of a deep sleep without being unsettled.

He was able, as a matter of course, distinctly to remember the breaking out of the French Revolution, and the universal rejoicing in it as an 'event of great promise.' Though he was brought up an orthodox Dissenter, he, like many other orthodox Dissenters, sympathized with Doctor Priestley during the Birmingham riots. At a banquet he defended Priestley. A toast was given 'in honor of Doctor Priestley and other Christ-'ian sufferers.' Some bigot present objected that he did not know the Doctor to be a Christian. Young Robinson answered that if this gentleman had read Priestley's Letter to the Swedenborgians he would have 'learned more of real Christianity 'than he seemed to know.'

From the French Revolution and the sufferings of English sympathizers therewith down to our American Civil War is a long stretch, not by years alone, but by the multitude of changes which

have on the whole bettered the conditions of human life. Crabb Robinson appears to have followed the events of the American struggle with keen interest, and on March 19, 1865, he writes to a friend: 'Nothing has brought me so near to 'being a partisan of President Lincoln as his in-'augural speech. How short and how wise! How 'true and how unaffected! It must make many 'converts. At least I should despair of any man 'who needs to be converted.'

Crabb Robinson was past his majority when *Lyrical Ballads* was published. He outlived Wordsworth by twenty-seven years, and Coleridge by thirty-three years. He had seen Matthew Arnold as a boy in his father's house. In 1866, meeting Arnold at the Athenæum, he asked him for the name of his most remarkable book. The author of *Essays in Criticism* denied having written anything remarkable. 'Then,' said Robinson, 'it 'must be some other Matthew Arnold whom they 'are talking about.' Subsequently Arnold sent the old gentleman the volume of his essays, and the last note in the *Diary* records the interest he took in reading the essay on the 'Function of Criticism 'at the Present Time.'

These facts bring out the limits of Robinson's experiences. He was eleven years old when Burns

printed his poems at Kilmarnock, sixteen years old when Boswell's *Life of Johnson* was published, twenty-three when the *Lyrical Ballads* appeared, and he lived into the very year which saw the publication of William Morris's *Jason* and Swinburne's *Song of Italy*. Between these extremes lay his intellectual life; and there were few things worth knowing of which he did not know something, and few people worth cultivating whom he had not cultivated. It is a temptation to roll the great names of great people as sweet morsels under the tongue.

In early life Robinson studied in Germany. He met Goethe and Schiller. He saw a performance of *Wallenstein's Tod* at the court theatre of Weimar, both the great poets being present; Schiller in his seat near the ducal box, and Goethe in his armchair in the centre aisle. Robinson declared that Goethe was the most oppressively handsome man he had ever seen. He met Wieland, who told him that *Pilgrim's Progress* was the book in which he had learned to read English. He heard Gall lecture on craniology, 'attended by Spurzheim as his 'famulus.' He met Wolf and Griesbach, and also Herder, to whom he lent a copy of the *Lyrical Ballads*. He saw Kotzebue, the dramatist, who was a star of considerable magnitude in those days.

Robinson describes him as 'a lively little man with 'black eyes.'

Another star rose above the Weimar horizon in the year 1803, and it was Madame de Staël. Robinson helped her in getting materials for her book on Germany, notably for the portions which related to German philosophy. Some years later, he was able to render her a considerable service in coming to terms with her English publisher.

When he returned to England to live he lost in no degree his 'facility in forming acquaintance.' He knew everybody outside of the circles which were purely fashionable. Being born a dissenter, his 'Dissenting connection' (I believe that is the phrase) would be very large. His attitude in this matter of the Church and Dissent was unusual, but easy to comprehend. He said he liked Dissent better than the Church, but he liked Churchmen better than Dissenters.

To mention but a few of the interesting people with whom he had personal relation. He knew Wakefield and Thelwall. He had an early passion for the writings of Godwin, used to see him occasionally, and once met Shelley at Godwin's house. He was interested in some plan to relieve Godwin from his financial difficulties, being one of many friends who were imposed upon by Godwin's

incapability for doing anything financially productive.

He had been a 'Times' correspondent in 1807, and his friendship for Walter was an undying one. In Walter's parlor he used to meet Peter Fraser, who in those days wrote the great leaders, the 'flash articles which made the sensation.' There it was that he saw old Combe, whose *Doctor Syntax* rich book-collectors still buy under the impression that it has something to do with literature. He used to play chess and drink tea with Mrs. Barbauld, and drink tea and play whist with Charles and Mary Lamb. One of his early loves was William Hazlitt, whom he pronounced clever before other people had learned to say it. He knew Coleridge, Southey, Flaxman, and Blake. His accounts of Coleridge give us some of the best side-lights that have been thrown upon that brilliant genius. He once heard Coleridge talk from three o'clock in the afternoon until twelve at night.

He knew Walter Savage Landor in Florence. Landor told him that he could not bear contradiction. 'Certainly I frequently did contradict 'him,' says Robinson. 'Yet his attentions to me 'were unwearied.' Landor gave Robinson a good word in a letter to a friend. It runs thus: 'I wish

'some accident may have brought you acquainted 'with Mr. Robinson, a friend of Wordsworth. He 'was a barrister, and notwithstanding, both hon- 'est and modest, — a character I never heard of 'before.' One of the prettiest incidents in the *Diary* is of Landor's sending his mastiff dog to take care of Crabb Robinson when he returned from Fiesole to Florence after midnight. 'I could 'never make him leave me until I was at the city 'gate; and then on my patting him on the head, 'as if he were conscious his protection was no 'longer needed, he would run off rapidly.'

III

Crabb Robinson justified his existence if only by the services he rendered Wordsworth. He was an early and discriminating admirer. He championed Wordsworth's poetry at a time when champions were few and not influential. It must have been with special reference to the needs of poets like the author of *Lyrical Ballads* that the saying 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak 'well of you' was uttered. Yet I am not sure but there is a measure of woe in the condition of him of whom all men speak ill. At a time when critical disapprobation was pretty nearly unanimous, Crabb Robinson's was one of the few voices raised

in commendation. It was not a loud voice, but it was clear and impressive.

Friends of Wordsworth's art sometimes express surprise, and even anger, that the public should have been so slow in awaking to the merits of that art. There is at least no occasion for surprise. When one considers the length of time it takes to interest the public mind in the high qualities of a new brand of soap, one may reasonably conclude that it will take even longer to arouse interest in the transcendental qualities of a new brand of poetry.

Some of Wordsworth's verse was not encouraging. One of the volumes of 1807 contains a poem beginning, 'I met Louisa in the shade.' This possibly struck readers as grotesque. Such a line provokes to irreverence. It is human nature to laugh and throw the volumes aside. But exactly at this point admirers like Henry Crabb Robinson began to exert their beneficent influence and to pay their unselfish homage.

Two sorts of homage are paid by lesser men to greater. The first sort consists in following one's idol about, noting the externals of his life, his diet, his dress, his gait; being solicitous as to the color of his necktie rather than the measure of his intellect. Homage of this kind seems to proceed on

the theory that if you only stare long enough at a man's head, you will presently be rewarded by a sight of his mind. It invokes the aid of photography. The author is exhibited in his study, his pen in hand. An admiring world beholds him in literary surroundings with a flash-light expression of countenance. Perhaps we have him in six different positions, with a quoted remark supposed to be in keeping with each position. He is in the act of telling how his mind rose to the great thought which has made him famous and worthy to be illustrated. He is photographed while saying to the camera, 'This idea came to me as I 'was on the way from my front porch to my front gate.'

Homage like this, so careful about externals, is not very good for the author, and is apt to be wholly bad in its effect upon the worshiper. Everybody has read Henry James's book entitled *Terminations*. It contains a story of a young American girl who waited upon a famous English novelist with a very large autograph album, in which she wished him to write a sentiment. I believe it is a quite general practice of young American girls abroad to travel with large autograph albums under their arms. It will be remembered, too, that the novelist's friend gently explained to the fair visitor

that true worship of genius does not consist in collecting autographs, but in reading an author's works, in seeking their deeper meaning, and in making those works known in places where they will be understood. And the young lady was persuaded to depart, with tears in her eyes, and without the great novelist's autograph.

Crabb Robinson's way of paying homage was very delicate. I think that it would have met with the hearty approval of even the author of *Terminations*. He liked Wordsworth's poetry, and he did his unostentatious best to make others like it. He did not cry aloud from the housetop that the Messiah of English verse had at last arrived, neither did he found a society. He spoke to people of Wordsworth's verse, got them to read it, occasionally read poems himself to receptive listeners. If people balked at 'Louisa in the Shade,' or were unsympathetic in attitude toward the 'Spade, 'with which Wilkinson hath till'd his Lands,' he urged upon them the necessity and the wisdom of judging a man by the noble parts of his work, and not by the less fortunate parts. If they had read Wordsworth only to laugh at him, he insisted upon reading to them those poems which compelled their admiration; for there are some poems with respect to which the public cannot maintain a

non-committal attitude. The public must either admire, or else consent to stultify itself by not admiring.

By this method he did more to advance Wordsworth's reputation than if he had written a dozen eulogistic articles in the great reviews. And we cannot overpraise the single-heartedness of his aim. There was positively no thought of self in it. With many men that which begins as pure admiration of genius ends as a form of self-love. They worship the great man two thirds for his own sake, and one third for the sake of themselves. There is pleasure in being known as the friend of him about whom everybody is talking. But we shall look in vain for any evidence that Crabb Robinson was impelled by motives of this lower sort.

He may therefore be imagined as reading Wordsworth's poetry to more or less willing listeners all his life. He had too much tact to overdo it, and he was too catholic in his poetic tastes ever to grow an intolerant Wordsworthian. He was content to sow the seed, and let come of it what would. In his German tour of 1829 he spent a considerable portion of his time reading poetry with his friend Knebel, 'and after all I did not fully impress him 'with Wordsworth's power.' He may even be sus-

pected of having read Wordsworth to Goethe, for in his correspondence with Zelter, Goethe speaks of Robinson as 'a kind of missionary of English 'literature.' 'He read to me and my daughter, 'together and apart, single poems.' In short, the *Diary* is studded with such entries as: 'Took tea 'with the Flaxmans, and read to them extracts 'from Wordsworth's new poems.' 'My visit to 'Witham was made partly that I might have the 'pleasure of reading *The Excursion* to Mrs. W. 'Pattison.' 'A call on Blake, — my third interview. 'I read to him Wordsworth's incomparable ode, 'which he heartily enjoyed.'

Crabb Robinson sacrificed in no degree his independence because of his personal relation to the poet. He regretted that Wordsworth should have reproached the bad taste of the times in his published notes and prefaces; and in the talk over the alterations which had been made in the poems Robinson frankly told Wordsworth that he did 'not dare to read aloud in company the lines Three 'feet long and two feet wide.' Wordsworth's reply was, 'They ought to be liked.'

It is rather a comfort to find from one or two of Wordsworth's letters how thoroughly human he was, even to the extent of getting out of conceit of his own trade, and wishing that petty

practitioners in the same trade were out of conceit of it, too. He disliked minor poets. 'I am sick of 'poetry,' he says; 'it overruns the country in all 'the shapes of the plagues of Egypt.' Wordsworth grew less intolerant, and was more willing to acknowledge the merits of other poets, as he grew older. No one welcomed this change more than Crabb Robinson. It is assuming too much to assume that he was influential in bringing about such modification in the poet's attitude toward men or things, but his influence would be in that direction rather than in any other. In later years Crabb Robinson used regularly to spend his Christmas holidays at Rydal Mount. His presence was regarded as essential to the sober merrymaking of the household there. They had a family saying, 'No Crabb, no Christmas.'

IV

The *Diary* is filled with suggestive points. To mention but one out of many. Without intending it Robinson makes clear the almost total extinction of Southey's life in mere books. He was a slave to the printed page. Wordsworth said, 'It is painful to see how completely dead Southey 'is become to all but books.' Robinson had himself noticed it. Rogers had noticed it. The talk

of it in Doctor Arnold's presence frightened him for his own safety, and he wondered whether he too was in danger of losing his interest in things, and retaining 'an interest in books only.' Southey made a visit to Paris, but all the time he was there he did not go once to the Louvre; 'he cared for 'nothing but the old book-shops.' But he must have gathered a few favorable impressions of the French capital, for he wrote to his daughter, 'I 'would rather live in Paris than be hanged.'

I believe that the evidence of the *Diary* goes to show that Crabb Robinson was able to pronounce upon new poetry. This is one of the most difficult and delicate of undertakings. People with that gift are few. With respect to poetry, most of us follow the hue and cry raised in the newspapers and literary journals. We are able to admire what we are told is admirable. When the road is pointed out for us we can travel it, but we are not able to find the road ourselves. Crabb Robinson placed himself upon record more than once. The most notable entry concerns Keats. In December, 1820, he wrote, 'I am greatly mis-'taken if Keats do not very soon take a high place 'among our poets.'

Of many good books which a man may read, if he will, this *Diary* of Henry Crabb Robinson

is one of the 'sweetest and most fortifying.' It is a fine illustration of literary sanity. A life like his is among the most potent influences for culture. He was modest, unassuming, gentle, and strong. He was a Successful Bachelor and a good man.

THE END

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